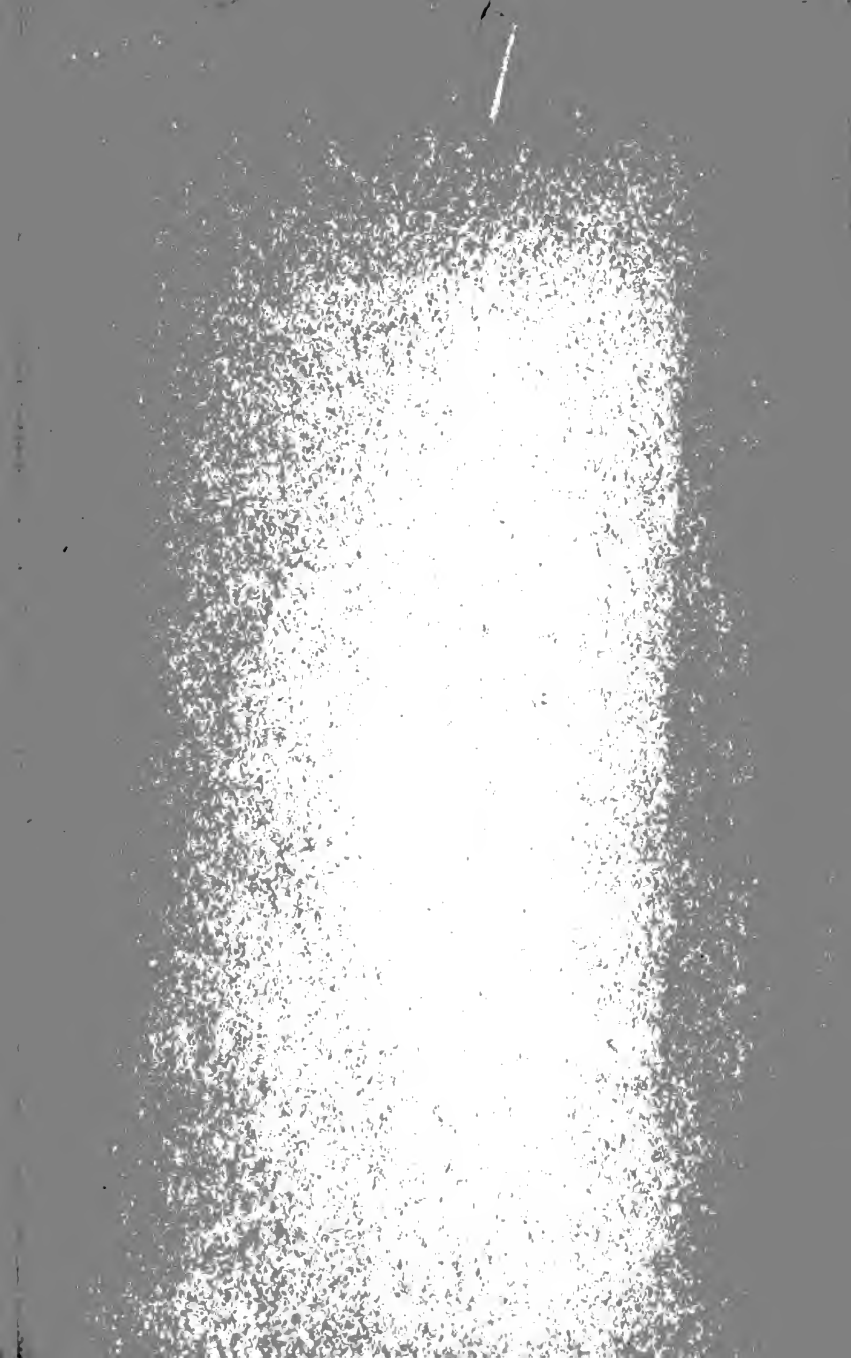


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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

By the same Author

THE RED CRAVAT

RUNNING HORSE INN

THE RISE OF LEDGAR DUNSTAN

THE QUEST OF LEDGAR DUNSTAN

A SON OF THE MANSE

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

BY

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TO THE
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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

I

WE came to Joppa on the morning of a blue and gold day ; but, entering the Moonpool in early evening, found ourselves shrouded by mist and overhung by tenebrous cloud. On a bale of sesame, I sat and watched the sights of deck and shore. Low, rock-bound coast, the surf white and high against it ; broken and battered walls ; at the extremity of a tiny cape, the white town ; sandhills ; and beyond, groves of blossoming fruit, white, and pink, and yellow. The quay was clamorous and crowded. Wheat, sesame, olives, golden piles of oranges, great stacks of timber from the Lebanon forests, lay disembarked or to be embarked ; Jews, Arabs, Greeks, Syro-Phœnicians, here and there a Roman soldier, haughty and erect, Italians, natives of the Gentile Islands, negroes, made a medley of colour, a Babel of sound,

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strange enough to my ears, which for so long had heard but the swish and rattle and hiss of seas, and the monotonous ship-talk of my companions. In the little harbour, the packed boats heaved and jostled.

My eyes, restless ever for food, sought the nearer sights. Wealth here in our heaped-up cargo ; wealth in the trappings of this Roman officer, broad and squat and lemon-faced, with his retinue. Wealth and colour on sea and shore ; though the pall of the thunder-cloud hung heavily above it all.

Ah, goodly and pleasant land, this of my birth to which I come after long exile ! Flowing with milk and honey ; rich with fruit and corn and sweet waters ! Big with thought, my mind travelled the years of sordid and splendid banishment. That I was found on the sea, they say ; another Moses, borne on his ark to fortune. What of my father, Simon—my mother, Cyborea ? Memory shows dim faces through the mist ; one loving, anxious, pleading ; I fancy I just remember her crooning to me in my infant slumbers. And my father—him I scarcely recall ; a rugged, battered man, red-haired and bearded ; his hands gnarled and knotted, his voice rough. . . . But father and mother to me alike were those

peasant folk who drew me from the sea. Our hovel was by the shore ; all the long, drowsy days I played among the boats and nets, the rocks and weed ; and grew bronzed and hale and clean of limb. Anilaïos was my friend and my companion. One day we were together on the beach ; I had two great shells which a sailor from Tyre had given me. They were pink and yellow and silver ; - how beautiful the colours ! And when I put them to my ears the murmur of the sea was in them.

“ Oh, give me one of your shells, Judas ! ” cried Anilaïos.

“ Why should I give you my shell ? ” I said.
“ What will you exchange for it ? ”

He had but a broken knife, old and rusty.
“ No,” I said. And a whim took me ; I was a proud boy. “ Kneel and worship me,” I said ; “ hail me as your king ! And the shell shall be yours.”

He reddened and flung himself on his knees. But he was haughty also, and quick of temper ; repenting instantly, he struck a great blow at me as I stooped graciously towards him. “ Worship a Jew bastard ! ” he cried. “ With my fist will I worship thee, scum that the sea flung to our threshold ! Taking that which

my parents earn and should earn for me and their own kin. Bastard ! Bastard ! ”

“ I am no bastard ; I am the child of a great lord and a great lady,” I tried to cry ; but my breath went from me ; I lay gasping : my pain was terrible to bear.

He crouched on the sand, watching with cruel and glittering eyes. Just so I have watched a sea-bird that has flung itself against our door, and has lain gasping its life out. Would it live ? Would it die ? How felt it—and where went the spirit when the wings that had flown so far hung at last limp and motionless ?

Just so he watched me. And my anger rose. I was smaller and weaker than he. I rose at last, and went sullenly apart. There was a rocky cave near at hand ; it was used to store fishermen’s creels ; the floor was of soft sand, and we often used it in our play. I went in, flung myself down on the sand, and wept. By and by he came to the entrance and mimicked me. “ Judas ! Judas ! ” he cried. “ Can you breathe again ? I have come to worship my king. Boo-hoo, boo-hoo, baby bastard ! How funnily you breathed ! Like the bird that died. . . . Perhaps you may die to-night ; ’twas a shrewd blow I gave you. Ho, ho, how

the way your gills moved—so, and so—made me laugh ! ” And he held both his sides at my anger and my misery.

But under me I had kept a great boulder, and stealthily I drew it forth and hurled it. His face and his yellow hair grew all bloody. It was like the swift turning of a picture ; this side one minute, this the next. He fell, and I stood, laughing, and then jumped round and round him. One of his red morocco *surmaiye* had fallen off, and the girdle had somehow come unloosed from his *kuftan* ; the blood streamed down over his brown, naked chest.

How odd he looked ! His bare legs began to shudder and to draw up and down. He howled like a jackal.

“ Your king wills you to die,” I said. “ Your king wills you to die ! ”

I was still laughing when a hand like iron caught my throat. I was shaken as rats are shaken ; it was Charpa, my foster-mother and his mother. “ Get you hence, little dog ! ” she cried, cuffing me, “ you shall lick no more platters in our home. You have killed my boy.”

“ Ahe, ahe,” whined Anilaio ; “ yes, he has killed me, mother ; the Jew bastard has killed me.” Oh, how I wished he lay there dead, and her too, the woman laying filthy hands on me !

She drove me from the cave ; night was falling, and a great wind churned the sea into foaming waves that flung themselves on the land and leapt, hissing, back. It grew quite dark. Uncertain of foot, sobbing and hungry, driven forth like Ishmael — but alone,—I wandered *ala Bab Allah*, towards God's Gate, as these Arabs say when they know not whither they go ; moving listlessly on towards whatever fate the darkness held. My feet sunk deep into sand ; once I stepped into a mess of some soft, sticky rock, which held me, and I had much ado to tear myself away. But the salt wind cheered me ; I love the wind, the darkness, loneliness, even though they frighten me. And, in an hour, I saw a prick of light through the pitch darkness ; it grew, and turned to ruddy flame from a fire of dried weed and wreckage. Around the fire were men, lean and savage, in tattered blue blankets ; they had bows and arrows and spears. I drew near them. There were a score or so about the fire ; the red flames brought fierce faces of men, pretty faces of young, unveiled women, hideous faces of old hags, toothless, and with pendulous thin breasts, in and out of darkness. I drew near them. Two or three sprang up. In a moment I was in their grasp ; they had torn from me my

clothes and clad me in an old and filthy sheepskin. For many weeks I lived with these outlaws, who got their living by wreckage and by robbery. We wandered along the coast, living in caverns ; by wandering lights, sometimes fastened to the horns of oxen, they lured rich argosies ashore. They drove with them a few asses, goats, and cows.

Aly es Sughir was their chief ; a man with a long flowing beard of grey. I had heard of Eleazer of Damascus, Abraham's servant—he who was so great that when Abraham chid him, and frightened him that he trembled, one of his double teeth, falling from his jaw, made him an ivory bed. Aly es Sughir was a man almost of like stature, and so strong that I have seen him hurl a slave who disobeyed him full fifteen feet on to a great rock, which dashed him to pieces. All the company feared him. He treated me at first very cruelly. One day I did not come swiftly to his call ; at night there was a great storm, and a ship of Sidon, laden with a rich cargo of gold and cedar and amber, was in distress. We swarmed aboard her ; killed the ship's company, but saving three women ; ransacked her, and were on the point of return. " Boy," said the chief, seizing me by the shoulder, " we find no use for you longer ;

your mouth is bigger than your hands." He thrust me into the ship's cabin, and bolted the door upon me. "For your lingering to-day, stay in the ship and drown, little rat," he cried; "and a merry death to you!"

I heard the dhow row off, the men singing a guttural song to which they plied the oars.

They had scuppered the ship, and very soon the water was pouring over the floor of the cabin. It was indeed to be a rat's death. But I was slim and active; with a bar of iron I prised wider the cabin window, and forced myself through just as the sea rushed in like a flood. . . . A few coins lay scattered; I put some in my mouth. With Anilaios I had learnt to swim very well. I swam ashore in the darkness; there was no sign of our company. My teeth chattered; the coast was inhospitable; I thought that I should still die. I found a little cave and made a fire of dried weed, lighting it with a flint and metal, as I had seen the men do. I found some shell-fish on the rocks, and there were berries a short distance inland which I ate. My coins were of gold; how I loved the glint of them in the firelight! "I will reach some city," I thought, "God protecting me; and then I will lay these out to usury, and I shall be rich as Solomon. I will build me a palace and

have slaves, and buy concubines ; and at last I will be a great king. . . . Or perhaps I will even be a robber chief, and have a castle on a high rock, and lure the ships ashore. And men will serve me and be frightened of me ; and when I grow up, if they disobey me, I will catch them up in my arms, and fling them a hundred cubits through the air. And all the men on the ships I will kill, unless they will obey me ; and the old women I will kill ; but the young women I will bring to my castle."

But the sun rose, and there were no people and no houses in sight—only sand and rocks, and tamarisks, and the blue sea stretching away and away without a sail. I walked on and on through the fierce sun, until I thought, " I can go on no longer. I must die." Then I saw a dark form crouched on the sand.

I went up cautiously ; it was a man of our company who had been beaten for some fault, and then had lagged behind, because he was too sore to go on. But he said they were not very far away. He had a few dates and a flask of water ; but would give me none, until I showed him one of my coins. We went on together. And when evening came, he ate his dates and drank his water, but offered me none.

I said, "Give me dates and water ; I hunger and die of thirst."

"By the Throne of Allah," he said, "am I then to die myself ?"

"But I have paid you !" I cried. "I gave you gold—gold for six dates and a drink of water."

"That was for one meal ; pay me yet another coin."

I drew out another coin, slowly ; his eyes glittered. I feared that he might take all while I slept. I thought, "It will all go soon ; and where will be my palace, my slaves, my castle ? I will wait until he sleeps and kill him with a great stone, or poison him with berries. And I will take what he has, and go on my way."

But when I crept up to him, thinking that he slept, he sprang suddenly up and caught my throat in his hands ; but he laughed, showing great white teeth. "Ah, boy," he said, "I have you ! By Elias' mantle, think you I am fool enough to sleep with two eyes shut ? I was not born yesterday. Pay me two gold pieces, or I kill you."

I wondered he did not kill me then ; but I think he liked to have me as companion, and feared to go alone, because now and again we

heard the howl of beasts along the shore ; and once a great grey wolf attacked us, but we beat it off. So we travelled on, and caught up to the company.

He joined them again ; but I feared lest Aly would kill me. I hung on their trail, picking up such fragments as they left ; now and then Ibrahim—my friend, as I could now call him—stole from the camp and sold me food. But by and by my coins had all gone.

One afternoon we came to a morass fringed with weeds, and running down to the sea. Pelicans and other strange birds haunted it.

One of the pirates drew his bow at a venture and shot a buffalo calf, which stood by its mother at the edge of the morass. The cow charged in rage ; the man flung himself to the ground ; but in the way was a favourite wife of the chief, making lentil pottage over a fire on the bank. I ran forward and threw a great rock at the cow, which would have gored the woman to death. It turned on me, and I fled ; but another arrow brought the cow down also.

I was brought before Aly es Sughir. “ Ah, little rat,” he said, stroking his beard, “ I did not know rats swam so well. Give him raiment, and food and drink.” And after that, I was kindly entreated.

We went inland, over great plains of salt and sand, with oases where we saw beautiful gazelles drinking under palms ; but sometimes we saw palms and waters, and gazelles leaping and drinking, but, hastening towards them, found it was but mirage. So was it to be in life ; one hastened towards the most enchanting pleasures and refreshments—only to find the serab. One of our Hebrew rabbis says that the works of the unfaithful are but as the serab in the desert. After these plains came a rocky plateau, where were frowning cliffs, deep ravines, and now and again forests of pine and fir. Lions, panthers, wolves, and all manner of beasts haunted this district, and many a steaming dish of venison did we enjoy. We carried black tents with us ; how fine the sunrises and sunsets over desert and rock ! Scarlet and gold, blue and green, saffron, lake, silver, purple ; the sky was like a vast artist's palette, from which the colours dripped on to and smeared the sands or bathed crags and tablelands. My spirit leapt up often at such a sight. When I was a tiny child, I remember, I held out my hands to a sunset, thinking I could grasp it. That must have been at Kerioth.

One day we had word of a rich caravan travelling to Baghdad. We lay in wait for many hours

behind a hedge of cactus. When we attacked and were helping ourselves to the spoils, a party of horsemen drew near, discharging arrows ; after a brief fight, we turned to fly. But they were too powerful for us ; many of our band were killed, and others—I among them—bound, and led before the chieftain.

He was a man of middle age, richly clad, and of noble countenance, with a long flowing beard flecked with white. He signed that some of our weaker men were to be killed ; two of the elder women were driven away ; the younger women and I were led to the rear of the caravan, given food, and well cared for. We journeyed easily, staying the nights at a caravanserai, until we reached a great white palace on the outskirts of the city. It was a famous place in that country ; beautiful gardens were filled with gay flowers, singing birds, and fountains and cascades. The palace was all of marbles, white and black, with curtains of Mecca stuffs, and Indian tapestries and silks. I worked with the slaves in the gardens. There were many shrubs and fruit trees ; oranges, apples, quince, plum, apricot, and china trees ; with many flowers of which I did not know the names. It was slave's work I had to do ; watering the garden with my feet, as Moses saw our people

do, and is no doubt still done in remote districts of our country, though not near Kerioth. The soil was saturated, and then we turned it over with the foot ; sometimes we were knee-deep in mud. In a day or two the lord of the place came to walk in his gardens, in the cool of the day ; he stopped and spoke to me, and of me to a slave. " That is a well-favoured boy," he said. " Who is he ? "

" He was taken, my lord, when we mastered the pirate band that attacked the caravan."

" So. . . . Let him be taken to the house."

I was led through a great marble hall where there were plashing fountains, then to a bath-house. Slaves drew near, and bathed me in warm and scented water. How happy I was ! I lay afterwards on a marble slab, and my body was anointed and my hair dressed. I was clad in a rich dress of silk bordered with gold. I was given iced sherbet and sweets—indeed, I was treated like a prince. . . . And later in the day I was taken to a hall, where lay the lord on a divan among cushions of many colours. He smoked an *argelah* with a bright green leather tube, corded with silver, sixteen feet long ; the bottle was of thick glass inlaid with gold. He drank coffee from a tiny cup with a holder of silver filigree.

For two years I was in his harems, where were boys, beautiful women, apes, dwarfs, and abortions ; vast wealth of gold and ivory, silver and fine woods and precious stones, silks and lace works of gold and silver. A fat, lazy eunuch had us in charge. His name was Hormisdas. He had gotten rich by procuration, and was a creature whose whole thought was for gold. One day our lord went to a villa he had on the sea-coast, in a small town named Zutra. The waves washed the garden walls ; he had a long tube of brass with glass in it, brought from China, through which he could see the ships larger than they really were. Many vessels passed, from Tyre and Sidon, Greece, Italy, and the Isles of the Gentiles ; there was a port three miles away. He took Hormisdas with him, and me among his pages. Here also were beautiful gardens, sloping to the sea ; they were filled with orange trees, olives, and rare palms and fruits ; there were golden fish in the pools, and under violet skies and stars we listened to the lutes of musicians, or watched the dancing maidens. But the life was too languorous for one of my ambitions. I was an especial favourite of my master, who made me from time to time small gifts ; wealthy as he was, he was never lavish.

One night I was in the bazaar of the town, buying scents. I was now a lad of sixteen, well grown and well favoured, with hair inclined to reddishness, and a clear, ruddy skin. My eyes—one curiously larger than the other—were dark and large and lustrous. I was bartering for a silver fretted phial of attar, when someone touched me on the arm.

I looked round ; an old woman, wrinkled and hideously ugly, beckoned me to follow her.

We passed through a wide archway into a narrow lane of hovels. It was packed with people. I held my purse tightly, fearing that my bearing and my dress—for I was richly clad—might attract covetous eyes. We passed the prison, guarded by huge negroes with bare scimitars ; just beyond it was another archway, horseshoe shaped, and a lane even more narrow and squalid than the first. I was led into a house. The lower part was used as a shop ; here were displayed carpets, mats, silks, and bottles of scent. But it was a mean hovel, for all that ; and I saw that people of my own race must dwell within, for the leaf-screen for the Feast of Tabernacles stood above the stairway. We passed up the ill-lit stairs of crumbling stone ; I was a little frightened, and kept one hand on my knife-hilt. The hag led

me into a room gaudily furnished ; there were bronze shields or plaques on the walls, rich rugs, cushions, a dais or divan of parti-coloured silk. By and by, as nothing happened, I made sharp enquiry of my hostess. She motioned for silence, and then clapped her hands. " You shall see, you shall see," she said excitedly.

And there entered one who still stands in memory as the most exquisitely lovely being I have ever seen. She had an oval, olive face, with eyes soft as a gazelle's ; she must have been but sixteen, yet already with the rounded form of early womanhood ; she wore a tunic and trousers of white silk braided with gold. She flung herself on the divan, looked at me shyly, and laughed. " Dance, Ayesha," said the woman.

She rose, pirouetted slowly on the smallest and daintiest of peaked red shoes ; eyeing me the while, she moved in slow but ever-widening circles. And then, the woman again clapping, she too clapped, and danced as I have never yet seen dancing—her form, light and sinuous, swaying, stooping, bending, quivering, until my whole frame quivered with sympathy in sensuous intoxication. And again the hag clapped, and, shyly glancing, the girl slipped from her coil of garments, and stood rose-naked before me.

"You like her?" asked the hag.

"She is—passable," I said with caution.

"But she is over young; not woman yet."

"Not woman? I am more perhaps to your fancy, my young lord." She gave a hideous cackling laugh, and pirouetted round; her lean breasts shook. "We are both for sale."

"What is the price of the girl?"

She named, as I expected, a figure utterly preposterous. I clicked with my mouth, and then offered a sum but one-tenth of that she had named.

"I do not sell even myself for so little," she said contemptuously. She tried, by wheedling, by enumeration of the girl's charms, to tempt me into purchase. "She plays the lute, also, and sings. Ayesha, sing and play."

So sweet a voice—dreamy with the dreaminess of moonlight on fountains. It was a song of one watching for a lover; far, far below the lattice lay the still market at evening, and the weary camels side by side.

"The girl is passable," I said. "I have seen many better!" But I had not. . . . I eyed her with the air of a connoisseur, as I were myself my lord buying for his harem. "Well, if I pass again, I will come and see if your offer has abated." I went away.

“Hormisdas,” I said that night, “I have seen the most beautiful being for our lord. She is but sixteen, and lovely as a Persian rose in snow. But her price is high.”

Hormisdas grunted, and then smacked his thick, fat lips, after a way he had. “Boy,” he said, “our lord does not trust the getting of his concubines to such as you. Yet where is this houri to be found?”

“No, no,” I said, huffed, “my lord does not trust the getting of his concubines to such as I. I was rash to speak. My taste is unformed; to your eyes, Hormisdas, she may be but a cow without beauty.”

“Still, I will see her.”

I let the edge of his curiosity be whetted. “I did not see her without cost,” I said at last. “Give me such a sum, and then my share when you purchase.”

“When I purchase! Ho, ho! I do not buy pigs in pokes, boy. I am not a man easy to please. That Circassian I bought was the pick of fifteen women, all beautiful. I know woman-flesh; no, no, I am not easy to please. Yet let us go.”

I would not take him until he had given certain moneys, and a promise of my commission on the purchase. We entered the hovel, and the

girl came in and danced. As she had looked shyly and smiled at me, so now at Hormisdas ; I tried to arrest her glance in vain ; I was nettled, for Hormisdas was fat and old and ugly, and a eunuch, although he tried to pass himself as a man. I could see that he liked the girl at first glance. How I hated him—and her, for making love to him ! Her eyes were pencilled with black, her cheeks painted the most delicate pink ; she had little amber rings in her ears, and a dress more beautiful than that in which I had seen her—it was of silver and pale blue. She played the lute and sang to it ; a song, now, of a robber chief who had had brought to him a slave maiden, and of her lover who tried to gain her back again. Her voice was as the voice of the sweetest singing-bird, rising and falling like a cascade of silvery water. She told him afterwards—nestling to him, with her little hand stroking his great palm—a wonderful story about genie, and a magic cornelian talisman, and a treasure cave with fifty brass urns of gold in an island garden. The hag and Hormisdas began to haggle over her price. His eyes were lustful and greedy in his greasy face, but he offered very little. “ If she were only beautiful,” said the old woman, “ that price would be absurd ; but she dances, she sings, she tells a

thousand stories which have been taught her. In all Arabia you will not find her equal. And she does magic."

"Let me see her magic," said Hormisdas.

She took a piece of aloes and coriander seed, and burnt them in a brazier, uttering various incantations. Then, making a paste of the ashes, she smeared them on the palm of the fat eunuch's hand, making a square in which the girl wrote certain Arabic numerals. In the centre of the square she let fall from a small bottle a few drops of ink. "Turshoon, Tur-yooshoon, come down, come down, come down," she muttered. "Be present. Whither are gone the prince and his troops? Where are el Ahhmar, the prince, and his troops? Be present, ye servants of these names. We have removed from thee the veil; one, two, THREE; and thy sight is piercing; correct, correct. . . . Now look, and you shall see."

Hormisdas stared in his palm. "It is amazing," he said, and grunted. "I see a street with palm trees and houses. A crowd fills it. They fall to one side and to another; but a score of boys lie together in the centre. . . . A procession approaches. A man on a splendid white horse draws near; he is magnificently clad. Behind him are other horsemen, camels,

negroes, men with swords and bows. But he spurs his horse, and rides over the pathway of boys, who spring up after him. . . . He is in a palace garden, and a slave girl comes to him, singing and playing. He fondles her. Another man comes out ; a man with a long beard. He is angry, and tries to wrest the girl away from the other. But she clings to the first man ; who draws his dagger, and kills the other."

" Can you see the faces ? "

" No—no, not distinctly. Ah, yes ; no—they are hazy."

" Look again ! "

" By Elias, 'tis the girl Ayesha's face ! "

" And now ? "

" It fades—this other face, alone on my palm, is my own."

" Yet again."

" The older man was my master. . . . It is marvellous."

" Is the girl to be yours ? "

He counted out the purchase money, and the girl, thickly veiled, was brought to the villa. And here she found favour with our lord.

But when I spoke to Hormisdas, I had no favourable answer. He shot his fat lips out ;
" Money ? I paid you money ; all that you

will have. Pester me no more, or I will have you soundly thrashed, boy."

And when I continued to speak, threatening to tell our master, he ordered the great negro who guarded the door of the women's quarter to lay his whip across my shoulders. It was of triple-thonged leather, loaded with copper nails. I ran, sobbing, into the gardens; my back was in great weals, and covered with blood. I went into a small arbour screened with cactus, and lay on a dusty bench; the arbour was rarely used, and was covered with webs. Now, in the garden were many herbs and poisons; our master's alchemist used them for his work. He was an ancient man, with a long white beard, and bald as a coot; I saw him creeping among the plants. I went out, and, questioning him, found which were the most deadly. When night fell, I went alone into the garden, and picked some of a dull purple flower, to take which meant sudden and painful death. Now, Hormisdas had each night a hot posset before he slept. I saw it steaming in the cauldron, and put in my flowers. I was in the mind to go at once; but I longed to see how the poison acted. I watched from behind a peacock-feather screen. By and by old fat Hormisdas came in, with white lamb's-wool stockings on

his feet ; a pleated night-robe, a cap of yellow silk ; oh, he spent his nights cosily ! And he ladled some of the posset into a cup of ivory chased with gold, and drank. And when he had drunk, quite suddenly he clapped his hands to his throat, and gurgled ; and his eyes rolled and started, and he began to scream. But when the slaves ran in, he toppled slowly over—he was a great fat figure of a man,—and crashed dead to the floor. I took what possessions I had, and a bag of money, and went out into the night. I looked up at the villa, and saw Ayesha at a window. “Ayesha, Ayesha,” I whispered, “I have killed old Hormisdas, and I am going away. Come with me ; you shall sing and dance and tell stories on the roads and in the bazaars, and we will make a great deal of money, and I will marry you. In my own country I shall be a great man.”

She broke off the song she was singing. “No, no ; I have my feet on the ladder here. Do you know what the father of our lord’s white donkey did ? He played at being a camel ; and at last he thought he was a camel, so he went for a long journey across the desert. And he had not seven stomachs, so he died of thirst.” But she kissed her hand to me,

and flung a red lily, which I put in my girdle.

I climbed over the sea-wall ; the tide was down, and I walked along the wet sands to the port. And here I found a ship bound for Joppa.

We had a fair but dull passage, with but little bad weather. . . . And now the journeying is over, and I am safe with my own people. My glance, passing from coast and harbour, surveys the nearer scene. I see the ringed ears and bronzed faces of mariners ; my glance rests on a device picked out in some blood-red pigment on one man's brown, hairy arm—a cross. It holds my eyes strangely. Again and again they return to it ; until, the creaking ropes holding the ship at last in mooring, we come ashore.

II

I LOOKED upwards ; the sky was black and ominous, and in a few seconds rain fell in immense drops. People on the quay scattered ; there were left but a few beggars, clamouring for alms. Some were blind, some eaten away by leprosy ; all were filthy. A man had been charming snakes ; as his audience dispersed, he put the snakes and his reed into a silk bag, and went away, swearing.

My purse was well charged ; I found an inn near the Moonpool. The khan was poor, but spacious ; an old, haggard, wheezy cow, an ass, two goats, and cocks and hens lay in the straw. We were given *kibbet samak*, which is a good dish, made of mutton and especially the fat of the sheep's tail, pounded, and cooked in a copper pot. Afterwards I flung myself down to sleep. Before many minutes, there was a tramp of feet ; the Roman officer and his men entered. Their cloaks were already sodden with

the rain, which fell now in a great sheet from heaven. I watched them as they ate the supper brought by the people of the inn; these were ill-favoured folk, and I was careful to guard my purse from their eyes. Wicks floating in stinking oil in a metal lamp cast a feeble light. I had just closed my eyes, when an unkempt, undersized man, driven in by the storm, came and lay beside me. He was a weaver; they are a miserable and scurrilous crew. Half-drunk, he sang snatches of ribald song.

It must have been drawing nigh morning, and I had been asleep some hours, when a movement in the straw near me roused me. I lay still, but watching. The rain beat heavily on the roof overhead; I fancied I heard also the howl of distant jackals. That is the most dismal sound in God's world, beginning with a low wail, which chokes off in a kind of despair, and rises again into noisy barking. It was almost dark in the khan. The air was close; the smell of damp straw, damp clothes, human beings, and animals, almost overwhelming. The cow wheezed and coughed. . . . I lay very still, and watched.

The weaver—he had but one eye—was sitting up and sharpening the knife used in his trade. Five paces away—in the farther corner

of the inn—the Roman officer lay on his back, a mountainous figure, snoring stertorously. One of his company had been set on guard, but the air of the inn was very close, and he was dozing, head on hands. The weaver rose at last, and crept across the mud-and-straw-covered floor.

I waited until he was within two paces of the sleeping man, and flung myself upon him.

With a cry the officer sprang up, and shouted to his men. From his girdle hung, by a brass chain, a leather wallet, which had evidently attracted the notice of the thief. The weaver struggled feebly, but was beaten with leather thongs and the flat of swords until he whined and howled for mercy.

“Put the vermin out,” said the officer, in a hard, yet—as it were—greasy voice; he was a man who had fared sumptuously. He turned to me, as his men beat and kicked the wretched weaver out into the storm.

“Who are you, good fellow?” he said. “I thank you for saving my purse, and perhaps my life. Of what nation are you—and of what trade?”

“I am a Jew, my lord,” I said, “born in Kerioth. But I am returned from long exile

in Arabia. I was a page in the house of the Sheikh Ibrahim el-Kanatar."

"And you go?"

"Towards God's Gate, my lord. . . . Whither fortune leads me. But first to Kerioth, to see my parents, if they live."

He wrote on his tablets, and handed me some writing in bold, strong Roman hand. "I am Flaccus Petronius, the new captain of Pontius Pilate's guard. If you are in Jerusalem, come and see me."

He took a gold piece of the Emperor from his wallet, and gave it me.

I went down to Kerioth; my mother was dead; my father, Simon, had married again. His wife was a low-browed, dark-visaged slut of a woman; she had round her half a dozen squalid brats. They pawed me with dirty hands, and held up messy faces to be kissed. But the eldest girl had a pretty enough face and engaging ways; already her dark eyes had learnt their woman-craft. Her name was Berenice.

When I made much of her, the mother flew into fury, fearing the evil eye; I had to blow in the child's face. "It is folly," I said. "How can a word of praise bring the devil into any child?"

"I suppose you young men are wiser than all

your forefathers," said the woman, snappishly. "I know not what the world comes to. Everyone knows the evil ones wait but their chance to enter. They are everywhere. Look at those oak-trees yonder. Why have we tied rags on them? Because of the Benat Yacobe, of course, the daughters of Jacob, who dwell in them. All wise people know that; and the very wise will not go near the trees at night."

"And who were Jacob's daughters?" I asked.

"Read the Scriptures," she answered. "There are things you don't know, travelled as you may be. That is one. I have seen evil spirits myself. Your father heard that there was a certain treasure buried in a field two leagues from here, and went to search for it. It had been buried by a great king who died long, long ago. He took his lanthorn—'twas an unwise thing to go at night,—and dug, as Job says, like the miserable who dig for death; and found to his joy two coins. He came running back to tell me, and, frightened as I was, I could not but go and see; four hands are better than two. Well, we were digging, and suddenly there was a great howling, and then a shrieking. What did we see but four evil spirits, tearing madly towards us through the darkness."

“ What were they like ? ”

“ One had a peaked hat of grey felt, and his eyes were balls of fire. And another had a fox’s brush on his head. His face was white as death, but the lips and eyes were red. Another had horns ; but the fourth was so horrible that I fainted clean away ; and when I came to, they had gone.”

She cared nothing about washing her children or mending their ragged clothes ; though Berenice was now old enough to look after herself. But the children were never without their charms and amulets. She said prayers almost from morning to night ; yet, as I say, was of a villainously shrewish temper.

My father still plied his trade as a metal worker ; he was now in middle life, he had grown slightly bald, and grey hairs flecked his beard. He was making a peloton for a priest when I entered.

I was travel-stained ; he did not know me ; and, taking me for a beggar, flung a small coin contemptuously, ordering me to be off.

“ Father, I am your son come again,” I said.

I had known our village, had remembered his trade, and how as a boy I had played by the forge and with the shining metals, making asses and cows and sheep from parings of copper

or from tin. I knew very well that he was my father ; his hair, too, was reddish, as I recalled it, and like my own.

" It is a wise son who knows his own father," he said gruffly. " Be off, or I lay this across your hide ! " He took up a heavy bar of iron. He was ever a churlish and hasty man.

" The fodder, the wand, and the burden for the ass's back," I said. " O father ; but I am indeed no ass. And indeed I am your son."

With which I sat myself by the forge and told him many things ; those dim half-memories of my childhood. I spoke of the three pigeons in the garret where I slept ; of the long days when I mimicked his work in the scraps he gave me ; of the songs my mother crooned and the stories she told. There was the story of Death coming to earth as a man and flying back again because of his wife's shrewishness. 'Tis an old story of the rabbis. Death became a physician and made much wealth, because he knew always how an illness or disease would end. When the other doctors differed, he would say at once, " Medicine will do no good ; the man must die " ; or, again, " He will recover." But his wife's nagging became intolerable, and he decided to die, and become Death again. He had a son who was also a

physician. "My son," he said to him, "I must die; I can bear your mother's tongue no longer. But listen to me, and I will make your fortune as I have made my own. When you are by the bedside of a sufferer, if you see me standing there, you will know that he cannot recover. If you do not see me, the man will get well, whatever medicine you give him." He said farewell, and died.

The son followed his father's advice, and became rich. But in time he was called to the sick-bed of a great prince. All other doctors had been called in, in vain. The prince feared death greatly, and promised his daughter in marriage, and half of his goods, to the one who healed him. Dr. Death had no sooner taken his place by the bedside, than, to his horror, he saw his father standing by the sick man.

"Father," he cried, "here's mother!"

Death vanished instantly. . . .

My father gave his short, barking laugh. He always laughed so, and the tale was his favourite. "Death was a wise man," he said, stroking his beard, "a wise man." And he glanced towards the broad back of his wife. "But what a fool to marry a shrewish woman!" It is strange how blind a man may be to his own position.

I stayed in Kerioth for several months. But the life grew in time intolerable. My step-mother had an ever-wagging tongue ; she gave us no peace ; and my father spent long hours at his prayers. He was of a most rigid piety. While I knew him, he ran the gamut of all the follies of the Pharisees ; now he would stumble in walking, as if too humble to lift his feet from the ground ; now walk with closed eyes lest he should see any woman other than his wife. He was always bruised or cut about the face in such a period, from dashing against walls and trees. His phylacteries were of the broadest. On Sabbath he was a great man in the synagogue. When he read the Law, he snuffled most detestably. Often he cross-examined me about Mikra, Mishna, and Talmud, and groaned at my little knowledge. Yet I held my own. We grew hot with argument, came sometimes almost to blows, because I laughed loudly at many of his follies.

“ Why did God give you eyes, if not to keep them open ? ” I would ask. “ Were I you, I should keep the closing of them to my own house. The rabbi who made that law knew not your wife, or he would have been more merciful.”

Scarce a point of the Law I did not question.

He spake once of the prohibition to seethe a kid in its mother's milk. "Yet I have tasted such a dish in Arabia," I said; "and good it is indeed, warming to the stomach, and giving a man heart for great deeds. They take a fat and tender young kid, dress it carefully, and stew it in sour milk mixed with onions and hot spices. *Lebn immu*, they call it."

"You, a Jew, should not have taken it, but left it to those idolaters. It is expressly forbidden by Moses to seethe a kid in its mother's milk."

"Oh, a good many years have gone since Moses died," I said lightly. My father flared out at this, which he thought rank blasphemy. "So you are come to teach us another law? There are those who would stone you to death for such a saying. You will be telling me next you are our promised Messiah."

"As for that," I said, "your promised Messiah is a long time coming. Each generation says, 'The Messiah is at hand'; and each generation says, dying, 'The time is not yet.' Oh, the prophets, I know the prophets! But what did they say? Dim, half-meaningless things; they scarce knew themselves the meaning. Says one, 'He is to be a great king, of David's house'; but another, 'of

herded. Often I spoke to the herdsmen about their work. Fierce, lean dogs aided them. The sheep knew the herdsman's voice, and would come to his call; I tried to make them answer me, but they looked round shyly, and ran. It is sometimes dangerous work on these hills. There are robbers; and sometimes wolves surround the cotes, and have to be driven off. Or perhaps I would wander to the vineyards, and a loud call would come from the tower, and the husbandman come down, bringing grapes, and ready for some talk. I could scarce bear myself at last within the house. "My son," said my father once, "I know what is the matter with you. The ruach has not yet changed into the nishama."

"And what are ruach and nishama?"

"Not know that? . . . The spirit, then, has not grown into the reasonable soul. You are more than twenty now. At eighteen—says Juda ben Tema—a young man should marry; at twenty, should acquire the reasonable soul, and gain wealth; at thirty, strength; at forty, prudence. . . . You are not married, rich, strong, prudent."

"Nor like to be in Kerioth," I grumbled. And I thought, "I must go away." I started at last for Jerusalem, thinking that there fortune

might await me, and bearing in mind also the invitation of the Roman officer. I reached the outskirts of the city an hour before sunset. From Olivet I watched—with what thoughts!—the mass “of gold and snow” which formed the city. How often had my father spoken of it! He had told me—though it was too long back for remembrance—that on the day Herod the Great was carried to the Herodium, he had brought me to the city. The streets were in festival, and through happy crowds passed the putrescent, worm-eaten body of the dead king, under a purple mantle, a gold crown, and glittering gems, and escorted by troops and priests scattering or burning incense. . . . I am very sure my father pointed the moral; that the splendid bier, the superb pall, were but the outer trappings of corruption. I have always been sorry not to have remembered; the thought that on this day I was indeed one of the long-vanished crowd, that thus for a brief hour I was in touch with that reign of lust, and cruelty and splendour, is still pleasant to me.

I flung myself down in the soft grass, and gazed for a full hour. The sky was of pale blue and faint gold; but each hour the colours deepened, until all the heavens were aflame.

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Behind me, away, and away, and away, far into blue distance, rolled the hills of Moab and Edom, and the Dead Sea scintillating in the late sun. Desolation, bareness, utter loneliness there ; an eagle flew to his eyrie, a vulture swooped down upon carrion. But before me stretched Jerusalem ; its streets brimming with life ; there, with its hills under trees and white houses, its triple walls, its many gates, its synagogues and tombs and palaces ; ay, and that Temple of which I had been so often told. There were the terraces, the splendid glittering doors, the courts, the steps, the marble pinnacles, the roof of gold. As I watched the tiny people in the streets, or black, like ants, about the gates—the people, the camels and asses, like children's toys—imagination peopled the city with the long dead. I saw the Jebusites sally from their hill fortress ; I saw David enter the city—and, where that glorious Temple stands, the threshing-floor of the Jebusite Araunah. I saw, as age after age passed, now Rabshakeh, now Necho, now Nebuchadnezzar, advance to the assault, with their chariots, and rams, and engines of war ; or, again, it would be some great festival of the Temple ; trumpets blared out, the ark was lifted and carried, the voices of the Levites rose in chant and psalm. 'Let

God arise, and let His enemies be scattered.' How often that cry of praise, which David wrote for the recovery of the ark, must have echoed through these hills, as it did even then !

The sun reddened, and the red glow fell on tortuous streets and markets and marble pilasters below Olivet. Jerusalem seemed bathed in blood—as how often in her history ! As how often again ! All day she had lain slumbering in the fierce sun ; and yesterday she had slumbered ; and to-morrow she would slumber. But some day she would wake, and spring up, and in her streets would be shouting, and in her streets blood. I thought, “ Some day, perchance—for I am young,—I may enter those gates, and found another kingdom on Mount Zion.” ’Twas but an idle dream, misty, intangible, as the shredded clouds ; to be blown away by a breath as I blew away the gossamer filaments of the webs that stretched from bush to bush ; yet such dreams I had often dreamed, but this was the longest, the most coloured, the most real. I sprang up from the grass in my excitement, and almost shouted. Yes, yes ; I saw myself ; I was on a white Arab barb, which pranced and curvetted, its saddle was of fine green leather and gold, its tail was dyed crimson ; and behind me—

A wandering sheep had been caught in the thicket near me. It bleated piteously. It was an old sheep, with a great tail, so heavy and so large that it trailed on a board with small wheels of solid wood. This board, caught between branches and brambles, held it so securely that it could not force itself free.

Now came a huge shepherd's dog, reddish-yellow, and with hair that bristled like a mane. Seeing me, and suspecting in me some robber or some enemy, it drew back its lips from the fangs, and rushed towards me. I hurled a great stone, and ran.

So, when I really entered Jerusalem, the entry was less splendid than in my dream. I came through the Shushan Gate, and found myself at once amid such clamour, turmoil, filth, squalor, as I had never yet encountered in my travels. Side by side were wealth and magnificence, poverty and misery. Oxen, sheep, goats, geese, asses, clustered in the arcades of the Temple; their ordure stained the mosaics of the pavement. Men sat by crates of cooing doves; the money-changers haggled.

I slept at a small inn in the Akra. The next morning I went to Herod's Pretorium, where the Procurator held his court. In the narrow

lane leading to the square before the palace, half a dozen ragged urchins strutted ; they had crowned with paper an old, blind, naked beggar, and mocked him with reeds, drums, and toy lutes, and sham homage.

He took a curious joy in the procession in which his was the leading part. The blare of trumpets soon told me that this was a mock prevision of a sight they were expecting. The Pretorium was built in two colossal wings of white marble ; between them was an open space filled with sculptured porticoes, statues, and many - coloured marbles. Hundreds of doves circled above, or lit upon green avenues, in which were reservoirs and fountains. Across this space, came the Procurator, Pontius Pilate, in procession. Ah, how I envied him ! Power, wealth, palaces, slaves, concubines, homage—showered upon one ; and I with but twenty shekels in my bag. My spirit leapt at the martial music, the tramp of ordered feet, the clatter of arms and trappings. Fine, bronzed, aquiline men, like their own eagles ; iron-hard to the eye ; I watched the soldiers pass. And at their head, on a black horse with gold and crimson harness, was my officer.

I was in a mind to advance at once towards him, and had his writing in my hand. But

he looked neither to right nor left. And one of the guard, seeing me leave the ranks of the rabble, thrust me back with his sword. . . . I could have killed the creature as he stood.

“Back, Jew!” he had said. Jew! And whose land was it? There was a King of Jews once. . . . “Fellow,” I thought, “though I dared not speak, “we had our own kings once, when Rome was but a heap of mud-hills; and this Zion was royal David’s city. What is this petty state of yours to that of Solomon?” I thought of his magnificence: the ivory throne guarded by lions of gold; the precious woods and stones and marbles and gold furnishings of his palace; his musicians and dancers and concubines; his escort, with their hair powdered with gold dust; the peacocks, the apes, the ivories, the shipmen, the artificers, thronging his palace courts. My eyes glittered, I thought; I know my heart was hot within me. The God of our fathers brought Nebuchadnezzar in his pride to the beasts; broke the power of mighty Babylon; smote Pharaoh with a rod of iron. And Rome in her pride would fall, in time—in time—before the breath of His anger. My father had told me already of the early days of Pilate’s rule, when he brought the silver eagles and insignia of his legions to the Holy City,

from Cesarea. Yes ; and he told me also how for five days and nights, sleeping under the open sky, our people had surrounded his palace, threats of massacre not deterring them, and had forced him to give way. The pride of mighty Rome must fall, and once again a king of our race hold the throne of David. . . . Our prophets had spoken. What saith Isaiah ? " Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and a man shall be a hiding-place from the wind." I was young, I was ambitious ; I knew the life of courts. Why should it not be I ?

And so I thought—but said not,—“ Fellow, a day cometh when not Pilate but Judas shall reign in Judea, and your eagles shall bow before him, and, in place of Tiberias, his image and superscription shall be upon your coins.” I marked his face, too ; the brow broad and low, the hair black, the mark of a sword-cut on his cheek. I marked all this ; thinking, “ In this very court, some day, shall I have you flogged for this insult.”

And Pilate passed, behind the glittering eagles, under great plumes of ostrich. Runners in cloth of gold were before him ; he had glossy Nubian slaves in his escort. . . . My lips shot out in contempt. How ancient was this city—how many, many sights had it seen, more

gorgeous far than this ! Pilate was a stoutish man, red-faced ; he had a great nose, like the beak of a bird of prey, and hard, staring eyes that looked glassily and with ineffable contempt on the rabble. Slaves, a conquered people, he saw before him. He cast that haughty glance on me for a moment. Such a glance might Pharaoh have flung, long, long years ago, at those toiling by Nile. Thus did Haman look, striding past Mordecai through the gate. " I am of the dominant race ; you of the conquered "—this it said. There is no crime in a look ; I stared back, thinking, " Behold your King ! " Because even as a child I knew that there was greatness in the lap of time for me.

I waited until the first watch of the evening ; it was the month of Chisleu, if I remember ; the nights at all events were cold. I went to the guard-house of the Pretorium, and asked to see the captain of the guard. The sentry to whom I spoke eyed me haughtily from head to foot, and bade me begone.

" I have his request that I should see him," I said. " This is his hand." And I showed him, but without letting it go from me, his writing which he had given me in the inn at Joppa.

The fellow's bearing changed instantly. He was not crushed and subservient, as I had hoped; but he became curtly civil. He took the writing to a centurion. I was ushered into a long stone gallery on the walls of which were manacles and arms; there was a row, also, of busts of Emperors and great men of Rome. We entered then a great hall in which men-at-arms sat before a blazing fire. I listened to their talk, though I understood very little. There were maids passing to and fro in the hall; the soldiers flung them lewd jests. They began to make me their butt; but not boldly, fearing my business. One burly fellow, whose face was brick-red, and his hair almost like that of a negro, dandled a rag baby he had made; he crooned absurd songs to it, keeping his comrades in roars of laughter.

I waited for a space that seemed many hours; then a negro in glittering uniform beckoned me to follow him. I passed then to a soldier, and afterwards to a small, ferret-like man, whom I took to be some kind of scribe. He led me to a small apartment, richly and yet plainly furnished. Plaques of gold were on the walls. At a marble table littered with parchments sat my stout, short, lemon-faced friend of Joppa. He knew me at once, and held me with hawk-like

eyes while he spoke. "In what country have you lived?" he asked.

"Emesa, my lord, of which Sampsigeranas is king. He was a rich and powerful monarch; three thousand mounted men rode with him in his progresses. His very horses ate from marble stalls, and he had armour all of fine gold. A hundred negroes, each seven feet in height, and dressed in white and silver, formed his bodyguard."

I was on safe ground; I had heard my master speak of the court of his king. "I was an under-chamberlain at his court," I went on to say.

He questioned me of the country; its size, inhabitants, products, industries. How many armed men could the king put in the field, and in what manner armed? My answers were jotted down on an ivory tablet. Rome, I thought, if this goes as far, will know more of Emesa than my master or its king.

"Well," he said at last, "there is a vacancy among the Procurator's pages; I will recommend you." He touched with an ivory hammer a small brass gong standing on the back of a wolf suckling children. A soldier entered, and stood stiff and erect.

In a few minutes I was taken through gallery

after gallery to a large chamber, where I was introduced to the master of the pages. He was a magnificent being, oiled and curled and much beringed. Several lads of about my own age were in his charge. In appearance and in foppishness they seemed to ape their master. I found him vain and overbearing, but not unkindly. We slept in a great apartment with arrow-shaped windows overlooking the Pretorium gardens. Pilate's palace had been built by Herod the Great, if I heard rightly ; it was very magnificent, with mosaic or tessellated floors, fine skins of beasts for rugs, and gold plaques upon the walls. It was my duty to attend Pilate to the baths, and in the cooling rooms to tell him the day's news from the city, the provinces, and Rome. These baths were very magnificent and luxurious ; the walls were painted with nude figures. The life was not unpleasant ; though I had much to bear from the disadvantage of my birth. Sometimes an embassy came from Rome ; then there would be great pageants, and often plays by the Roman writers would be acted in the theatre behind the Pretorium. Pilate had a villa on the coast, ten miles from Joppa ; here, as in my old master's villa on the Arabian shore, the seas washed the walls of the garden at high tide.

We went there every Elul, the month of vintage. It was very pleasant then in the gardens, and in the vineyards on the hills.

There were two young Jewish girls in the household, Deborah and Drusilla. Often in the evenings I would sit beneath the vines, or, when we were in Jerusalem, in the green avenues facing the Pretorium, with Drusilla. We became good friends. At eighteen, says Juda ben Tema, a young man should marry. I was long past eighteen. Very often the words offering marriage were on my lips ; I hesitated ; now I was safely on the road to fortune, and the life of the Procuratorial court would train me for my destiny, when the God of our fathers should call me, as He called Saul and David, to rule in Judea. But when that day came, the hands of rich and beautiful princesses would be mine for asking. . . . Drusilla's father was but a leather merchant in the city. . . . I hesitated, I say ; the words came not, though Drusilla longed to hear them. And so the days passed.

III

DRUSILLA was very beautiful, with sloe-black eyes, and oval, olive face ; her hair curled, and black as jet. She was piqued by my continued hesitancy, and came very near to tears. But it was not only ambition that deterred me ; there was one I loved even more dearly. This was little Berenice. I went very often to Kerioth, but only that I might see her. She was very different from the unkempt and noisy brats who called her sister ; a little maid now of perhaps sixteen, full of merriment and mischief, and as beautiful as a lily. I loved her at first sight. Very often she came with me to the hillside, or to the farther hills, which the pale yellow vine-flowers covered in their season. She had a small white goat, which she milked with her own hands ; it was belled, and she had covered its horns with golden foil from the shop. Berenice, the goat, and I spent many happy hours together. Dimpled chin in the

cup of her two hands, she would listen to my stories of the courts and of travel ; and in return tell me the old legends of Jewry.

I grew to love her very dearly.

The last time I went to Kerioth was in the month of Thammuz. The vines were all in flower, and the countryside very beautiful. As I came down towards the village, I saw Berenice at a wall just on its outskirts ; the Kerioth well had suddenly gone dry. Other village maidens and three or four idle lads were round the well, and some cattle ; the girls had pitchers. A big buffalo's skin had been let down by ropes, and in this they drew up the water. One of the lads had just put a sprig of berries in Berenice's breast. Her brown arms were bare almost to the shoulder ; her dress opened widely at the neck, showing the bosom just ripening into womanhood.

My father was still as irascible as ever ; we quarrelled daily. I was uncomfortable in his presence. The meticulous Pharisaic righteousness which he affected irritated me continually. I watched him at his prayers, listened to his snuffling reading of the Law, observed the petty rigidness of his conduct, with an annoyance that grew almost—and would have grown with certainty in time—to hatred. He had

two friends who constantly visited the shop—a short, squat, oily little Pharisee, very unctuous ; and another man, who was tall, thin, and lugubrious. They beat out every minute point of the Law and bandied names of rabbis, prophets, and teachers, until the room was like some village Sanhedrin hall. Shammai, the gentle Hillel, Gamaliel, Akiba—it was what this said, that thought, from morning to night. I remember one whole evening being spent over the one word “ervath,” which Moses used in regard to divorce, and which different schools interpreted in many different ways. I was always glad when my father was away from home.

One Sabbath evening he was at the synagogue later than usual, for he was helping to count in the treasury the money paid by our village for the ransom of souls. It was a glorious evening. The setting sun bathed the vine-clad hills in pink and gold ; the violet sky was spangled with brightest silver. There was a small orchard, with but a few twisted olives and a fig-tree in it ; I paced to and fro, enjoying the air. It was a relief to be free from my father’s querulousness and fault-finding, and the clack-clack of my stepmother’s tongue ; she had gone to visit a woman who was sick. . . .

And, as I walked up and down under the trees, dreaming glorious dreams of the day when some arbitrary act of Rome, some revolt, some stirring of the hot ancient blood of our race, and revival of dim but splendid memories, would bring the chance for which I waited, I saw a faint light glow for a moment in the attic window where the children slept. For a few minutes I took no notice. I had great pleasure in these dreams of future greatness ; I built me in fancy wondrous palaces of marble, cedar, gold, and bronze ; horsemen and footmen paraded before me ; vassal kings—and Herod Antipas among them—ate beneath my table, as I had somewhere read, and fought for the crumbs that fell ; I was priest also, and wrote psalms more wonderful than ever David wrote for my minstrels. Indeed, I had already written one, which Berenice thought the finest she had ever read.

I knew that the children were all abed. I watched in idle curiosity ; in a minute I saw the gleam of white skin, the flash of cotton fabric : it was Berenice stripping from her shift. I have said she was ever full of mischief. She saw me suddenly, put on a look of coyness ; “ Oh, Judas,” she said, “ I thought you were at the synagogue.”

My mouth grew dry. "Berenice!" I cried. "Berenice!" But she had closed the lattice, and dropped over it the curtain. Only, a moment later, a corner of the curtain was withdrawn, and I saw two dark eyes look through invitingly—so I thought. I entered the house, and went noiselessly up to the attic. I pushed open the door.

The younger children were all in bed. Berenice stood. . . .

The memory of the slave girl whom I had bought for my master flashed across my mind, as she had danced, rose-naked, before me in the Jewish house. But Berenice was more beautiful. So young, so slim, so lissom; and she gave a little cry when I entered, but her eyes were mischievous. . . . There were heavy feet on the ladder. I turned, as my father entered. His eyes had in them a glint of fiery anger; I have seen something of that red light in the eyes of a dog. He had a bar of iron in his hand.

"You good-for-nothing scoundrel!" he cried. "I cannot even leave my home in security on a Sabbath evening. Thief, murderer, and now——"

"Who is a thief and a murderer?" I flashed out in equal anger. "I am none."

"Why left you that foreign court? Answer

me that. Your mother's dream, which made us give you to the sea, is not forgotten."

"And what was that?" I asked scornfully. "You are packed with old wives' tales and nonsense as an egg with meat."

"She dreamed that you would murder me, and commit incest with her."

"Well . . . have I done either? You are well; my mother is in her grave."

"Yes, precious soul; God be thanked she did not live to see the monster she gave birth to. And I leave this house but for an hour or two; and when my back is turned—this. Berenice, cover yourself in the bed. And you, Judas, Sabbath being over, get you to some task at the forge, and let the swift flying of the *tubal* (metal splinters) blot out your transgression. When the Creator said to Adam that thorns and thistles should be his portion, he wept, and said, 'Wilt Thou make me eat from the ass's crib?' but when God said, 'By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread,' he laughed for joy. Work will cure your wandering lusts, and if not work, the whip. Get you below."

"You will lay no whip upon my shoulders," I said. "I am sick of you and of your work. Tinker your metals yourself, it is what you are

fit for. To make stupid amulets for old women ! Pretty devils, I should think, to fear anything you can make ! I have lived in princes' courts, I . . . What is your metal tinkering to me ? ”

“ Who bade you come home ? ” asked my father, sharply.

“ I came in duty. . . . A pretty home ; you, with your snuffling righteousness ; your squalling brats ; your wife, with a tongue like Edom vinegar. A pretty home ! . . . The only one worth a prutah is that little Berenice of mine.” For my anger had risen.

“ Speak not of my wife and children,” said my father, sternly, “ or I lay this bar against your hide. Get you below, while my righteous wrath is in check.”

But I stood motionless.

“ Do you hear me ? ” cried my father, his voice rising to a scream. He nor I could ever brook opposition. “ Get you below, and to your work.” His face was as red as his beard.

I hesitated. “ Good-night, Berenice, dear,” I said, and went towards her in the bed, to kiss her. How sweet she looked—the face flushed, the eyes so soft and dark, half frightened, yet half merry !

“ A stick would do the girl no harm, little . . . ” He used a word which I had never

heard on his lips. And at that my anger broke all restraints.

“Take back that name, canting Pharisee!” I cried, and motioned as if to strike him with my clenched fist. I should not really have struck, I think; he was still my father. But at that he ran at me like a bull, and struck me on the hand with his bar of iron. The blood rushed to my head; I scarcely knew what I did. . . . My little Berenice began to cry. Did I strike him? Did I push him? Did the blow throw him from his balance? I do not know. But he fell or stumbled; clutched wildly in air; and crashed down the ladder to the floor of the shop below. His head struck the corner of the forge. I stood, thunder-struck; for a minute I could not move, and my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth.

“Father,” I cried at last. “Father, dear, are you hurt? Are you hurt? It was not my fault—it was an accident—O my father!”

But he lay quite still; and his wife, rushing in from her pans, was wailing over him, and covering him with her hair. I pushed her aside. “Stand back, woman,” I said; “I am lord of this house now.” I knelt beside him. His hair was matted with blood, his eyes were already glazing. . . . Yes, he was dead.

I paced the shop in silent misery. Again and again I came back, and looked at the prostrate form, the still, white face against which the red of hair and beard stood in such sharp contrast. I put two small coins on his eyes that they might not glare at me in reproach. . . . A thousand memories thronged my mind. At the very beginning, the dim figure of that rugged man flinging me chips and splinters for playthings ; and since then, my many visits. . . . I went out at last into the night, to the rulers of the village synagogue.

“ My father is dead,” I said. “ He has fallen down the ladder from the attic to the shop ; his head struck the corner of the forge ; he lies dead. O my father ! ”

They came with me ; no one hinted at murder. But it seemed to me, as I thought more clearly, that I had really struck him, in my anger. Conscience accused me. He was dead, and I had killed him.

I waited for the prayers, and for his burial. He lay at last with his fathers in the cemetery on the outskirts of the village. I took my portion of his goods ; with part I bought a small vineyard near Kerieth, in which I placed a husbandman. Then I went back from Kerieth to Jerusalem.

Every step of the way was agony. I could not rest ; at night I tossed, sleepless, from side to side. I had killed my father ; I had killed my father ! Every detail was branded on memory. Again and again I went over it all : his entry, his reproof—yet there seemed kindness in what he had said about work,—his quick movement of rage as he struck the blow, his stumble, and headlong fall. And then his grey-red hair matted with his blood, and the blood trickling across the dust and refuse of the workshop.

A just man, I thought ; a Pharisee of the Pharisees, yet a good and a just man. If he preached rigidly the very letter of the Law, yet he kept it. In the synagogue and in the village he was respected. Moses Meir, the fat little Pharisee who came so often to see him, shed copious tears. They had known each other from boyhood. He had defrauded no man. He worked hard.

And I had killed him.

I entered the city by the King Gate. How noisy, how full of life and colour and business after the quiet village ! Here were the dovesellers, the drovers with their oxen. Here a dyer stood with his coloured threads in his ears ; there a goldsmith haggled over the price of a

terpole, an artificial vine of embossed gold. Greeks, Romans, Syro-Phœnicians, Jews ; a white-robed Essene slinking noiselessly through the throng ; a cohort of the Augustan band ; a seller of grape juice ; a man ladling oil with a clay egg from a vast jar into the vessels of passers-by. An armourer hammered at a damascened sword ; a tailor trimmed the prayer-mantle with fringes. . . . Near the Women's Tower were the hired servants ; and by the Market Gate the asses and their drivers. Life everywhere ; hubbub everywhere ; brisk movement everywhere. Two men were quarrelling ; " Stinking fungus," one calls the other ; "*Afra lefrum de Jhob*" (" Dust in Job's mouth"), " shut up, foul-mouthed rascal," cries the other ; and they come to blows.

And by the entrance to the Pretorium a father held by the hand his little brown-skinned son. The boy's eyes were bright and like sloes. And the father bent down, pointing out to him the sights ; telling him what this man was—what that ; showing him the working of a pepper-mill that a man ground in the gutter ; no doubt telling him the history of the city and its ancient glory.

My heart filled with tears. I to be king in Judea—I, a parricide who could not rule the

heart God had given me ! Ah, but a heart so turbulent. . . . When I had killed the eunuch, I had no after-scruple. Fat pig, he deserved to die ; all hated him ! But my father was a just man. Crushed, my head bowed in misery, I entered the palace. Drusilla ran to meet me. " Oh, Judas, how I have looked for your coming ! " she said.

" Peace, girl ; I have no mind for dallying. Peace, I say ; my hands are not clean." And it was on my lips to say, " I have slain a man to mine hurt."

But I kept silence, and Drusilla stepped back, perplexed, sad ; with a look in her eyes that longed to comfort me, I knew, if I would but tell her all.

I lay awake through the night.

And, as the days passed—at the baths with my lord ; in the room where Tryphon, the court barber, dressed his hair ; at the play ; in processions through the street ; in the market-place ; my burden did not lessen. Not for a minute could I blot out those pictures from my mind. In the faces of men around me I seemed to see my dead father's face, reproachful, horror-struck at my impiety, suffering. Chance words in the street accused me. In the reading of Law and prophets, in the synagogue, how

often did that name " Father " come, stabbing me to the heart ! The God of our fathers ! The sins of the fathers ! But my father was a just man.

I tried to assuage my remorse by memories of his Pharisaic narrowness ; his broad phylacteries ; his quick temper ; his snuffing voice which had so often goaded me nearly to madness. It was of no avail. He was a just man.

And yet this had been prophesied.

He had told me of my dead mother's dream ; that I should murder him, and commit incest with her. And I had murdered him. . . . The prophecy in part was true. God had indeed warned her in dream, as He warned men of old. How terrible that dream to her ; so loving, so anxious ; expecting in her boy the promised Messiah ! For that reason they had cast me to the sea.

Secret knowledge gnawed night and day at my heart. I wandered much alone. But at last the weight grew too heavy for me to bear. All joy of life seemed to be gone for ever. I, a parricide !

In a month I went down again to Kerioth, to see my vineyard. When I entered the shop, my stepmother spat, and turned her back on me. Moses Meir was in the shop also ; I

spoke to him, bidding him good-day ; he said nothing, and shuffled nervously out.

I went into the street ; Berenice was not in the house ; the younger children screamed when I came near, but one, bolder than the rest, flung a stone at me. And in the street, neighbours with whom I had once been on friendly terms, eyed me askance, and turned away when I spoke.

I met Berenice coming with her pitcher from the well. " You at least do not turn away from me," I said.

" Why should I ? I think as you do, Judas ; I have learnt from you, under the olives ; you were my rabbi at whose feet I sat. I care not that "—and she flicked her fingers—" for their Niddui. No ; nor their Cherim, nor yet " (but she looked a little pale as she said it) " their Shammata."

" Niddui ? Cherim ? Shammata ? What are you talking about, girl ? "

" Oh, I thought you must have heard. Mother and Moses Meir have been busy with the rulers about you ; they wanted even the Shammata."

" By Elias' mantle," I cried, " even that—then on what accusation ? "

" That you killed your father. If there had been evidence, they would have brought

you to your death. My mother hates you ; I think she did from the first. She thinks your vineyard even should rightly be hers. But when old Moses asks me, in his oily way, I say, ' No, of course, Judas was not to blame. His father struck him, and slipped, and fell.' But Moses has many friends, and they say that although you did not kill father, your hand struck him. So you had not heard ? The Sabbath after you left, your name and offence were read out in the synagogue. And on three Sabbaths after, as is the rule, your name and offence ; and you were not there to answer. And after that, the Niddui, the solemn interdict ; so now—it was pronounced last Sabbath—for thirty days you are cut off from Israel. That is why none speak to you. If you died now, they would stone your coffin."

" Oh, they have done that, have they ? " I asked.

" Yes, Judas. And mother says it will be the Cherim next. But Moses said they could not get the Shammata ; that is very terrible, is it not, Judas ? "

" That is the worst of all. Yes ; it is very terrible. After the Cherim you may repent and be taken again ; but after the Shammata—never. So that was your mother and Moses

Meir, was it? Well; now here is Moses, waddling down the street, like a bandy-legged fatted fowl; and I will show you what the Shammata is like."

As the Pharisee came within earshot, on his slow progress from the shop, I hailed him, and called, "Moses Meir, I pronounce on you the Shammata!" And then I excommunicated, anathematised, and cursed him; by the book of the Law, by the ninety-three precepts, by the malediction of Joshua against Jericho, by the malediction of Elisha against the children who mocked him. I cursed him by spirits of earth and heaven and hell; by the Seraphim; by the heavenly orbs. "May nothing good come out of thee," I cried, while a wondering audience of villagers and children listened in awe; "may thy end be sudden, may all creatures become thy enemies, may the whirlwind crush thee, may fever and plague and leprosy and all maladies strike thee, may thy death be unforeseen, and drive thee into outer darkness."

He turned livid, shook a plump fist at me, spat, and shuffled off.

I laughed. "Just so much do I care for their curses, Berenice. Now, let us go to our vineyard."

Had she dared or been able, my stepmother

would certainly have refused me the house. As it was, she would cook no food, and would not sit with me or talk ; Berenice prepared food with her own hands. I laughed and mocked ; but secretly it troubled me. The heart knows its own bitterness. I had been trying to forget ; this visit to Kerioth revived all the thought I had so nearly stifled. Did I not deserve to be an outcast ?

“ If Berenice were not my sister,” I thought, “ I would marry her. I love her better than Drusilla ! ”

And one evening, when my stepmother was again visiting the sick—she made much of her noisy philanthropy, with an eye, I am sure, to a later world,—I walked again under the trees ; and again there was a light in the window . . . my father lying with his fathers in the tomb.

* * * * *

On the night of my return to Jerusalem, Drusilla stole into the garden, where I sat. The sky was soft as velvet with early night ; a late bird sang. From the guardhouse came bursts of music, now loud, now low ; the soldiers of the band practised with cymbals and brass instruments. The Thracian maid of Pilate's wife was in the arbour with her lover, one of

the pages ; I could hear the low murmur of their voices. . . . And Drusilla stole out to me.

We sat for some time in silence. By and by her hand stole into mine. "Judas," she whispered, "you are in some trouble. What ails you ? Let me know your secret."

Oh, how I longed to share my burden !

"Drusilla," I said, "I can trust you. Can I trust you ? I am very lonely ; I was lonely, even as a child. I think you are my only friend. Can I trust you ?"

"With my life," she said.

"Do you know what parricide is, Drusilla ?" I asked her.

"To kill one's father ? Yes."

"What think you of such a crime ?"

"It is a very terrible one—the most terrible," she said. And she told me some tale of old Rome ; a tale of a man who killed his father, and went out and hanged himself.

"Yes, it is a very terrible crime," I said, and was silent. Then I whispered, "Drusilla, I have killed my father."

In a few words, I told her what had happened.

"But then you did not really kill him," she said. "Poor Judas ! You did not really kill him."

“ Poor ? You pity *me* ? ”

“ I pity you—for you accuse yourself falsely. You say he stumbled. He fell headlong down the ladder.”

“ Ah, but I struck him. I have thought it all over ; I know now that I struck him.”

“ No, no, no ; it was not you who killed him. And he was a bad man.”

“ He was not, Drusilla,” I said. “ He was a good man, a very good man.”

“ Oh, I know that goodness,” she said, tossing her dark head. “ I had an uncle who was just so good. He sold phylacteries, praying-shawls, talismans, charms against the evil ones, in the Old Market. Oh, the snuffling, sing-song prayers ! Oh, the oily righteousness of jot and tittle ! I know. It is a kind to drive one mad. I tell you, Judas, with such a father I should kill him.”

“ You should not say so, Drusilla. My heart smites me for my guilt. The synagogue at Kerioth has shut me out from Israel ; you should not even speak to me. . . . I had not told you that. Are you not afraid ? ”

“ Who is to hear us ? ” she whispered. Her voice was like the cooing of a dove. “ Judas, in this city there are half a thousand synagogues ; if they—how do you call it ? If they cursed

you in every one, on half a thousand Sabbaths I should still speak to you. I should ; I should."

" Oh, he was a good man, a just man, a good father ! " I wailed, now rocking to and fro without restraint. " Every night he comes to haunt me ; his eyes look sadly at me, and there is blood on his hair and beard."

" 'Tis but a dream, dear Judas."

" Dream or no dream, I see him." I beat my breast in agony.

For some minutes she was silent ; but her hand moved softly in mine.

" Judas," she said at last, " I have heard of a good man different from that ; not a Pharisee. He was brought up as we were brought up ; a *ben hattorah* (son of the Law) at thirteen ; presented in the synagogue on the *shabbath tephillin*. He knows the Law and the prophets. But he wears no broad phylacteries ; does not stumble in walking, or bruise himself against walls. Indeed, he hates those Pharisees as bitterly as I. He is a great teacher ; he tells men strange things which none know or have guessed. Things of a new kingdom, a new life——"

" A new life ! That is good ; ah, I should like a new life. But how a new kingdom ?

Does he set himself against Rome? It will be the potsherd against iron; Rome is iron, which only stronger iron can break. Oh, Drusilla, I have heard talk of these Messiahs so often!"

"I don't quite know what his kingdom means," said Drusilla. "But I know he speaks of a beautiful world beyond this world, where there is no sorrow, and no death. He heals the sick——"

"I have heard talk of a beautiful world beyond this world. My father spoke of it, and cursed the Sadducees who thought man but dust that, turning to dust again, is dust for ever. The Pharisees believe that the soul lives for ever. . . . I have often wondered what Rabbi Judah ben Tabbai and Rabbi Simon ben Shetach will say when they meet the eighty witches."

"What eighty?" asked Drusilla.

"When they were Presidents, they hanged eighty in one day. I have lived in the desert, Drusilla, and I have seen the mirage. For hours you wander, seeing water, palm-trees, gazelles drinking and leaping; I have seen them. But by and by you find there is nothing but sand. Now tell me more of your teacher."

"The mirage gives you heart, though, for your journey?"

"Oh—it gives one heart; but there is nothing. And I think I would rather know that there is nothing. To go on; to travel hopefully; and to find at last that there is nothing but dry sand and fierce sun. Look you, Drusilla. God blew with His breath on earth and water, and little bubbles of mud came. And for a little while these bubbles last; and they catch the colours of the sun; but they go out again—and where are they? But tell me more of your teacher."

"He heals the sick, they say, and does many wonderful works. I have heard some of his words; they seem to me very beautiful. Will you go to him?"

"With what end?" I said. "Can he bring back the dead to life?"

"They say he has even done that," she answered. "I have only heard; I do not know."

"Nor I," I said, with some contempt. "Listen, Drusilla. Last evening I passed the cemetery near the Shushan Gate. It was moonlight, and, in the light of the moon, what think you I saw?"

"I do not know," she said.

“ An old, grey hyena, very mangy, limping from his evening meal. He had in his maw the bone of a dead man. It was covered with earth and green mildew. He dropped it to snarl at me. . . . That is what I saw, Drusilla. Let any teacher clothe such bones as that with flesh ; let him put life into the flesh ; I will follow him whithersoever he goeth. Not otherwise. No, girl ; your teacher raises no dead men ; it is an idle tale. My father lies with his fathers, and his flesh rots even now from his bones. Cæsar himself cannot raise him.”

“ No, not Cæsar, of a surety,” she said, and mused.

“ But a month since,” I said, “ Herod’s cupbearer lost his only boy. He was hunting in the Edomite marshes, and a boar’s tusk killed him. The cupbearer is a rich man, and in great favour with his master. Had there been in all Judea, in all Syria, one who could raise the dead, think you they would not have sent for him ? Think you he would not have come, knowing the reward ? ”

“ They say he cares nothing for wealth or power,” said Drusilla.

“ Yet you spake of a kingdom.”

“ Yes—that I cannot understand But I know very well the dead have been raised. I

know that very well. There are the prophets—and the witch of Endor—and the valley of dry bones. . . . But it is his words that are so beautiful. I have learnt one prayer he taught: ‘Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done——’”

“It must be this kingdom he means. A mirage, Drusilla; a mirage on the desert sands!”

“‘Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’ . . . Is not that beautiful, Judas? And what think you he said of hypocrites? ‘When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.’ And again he said, ‘Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and

thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.' Are they not good words, Judas ? I have heard never the like."

"They are good words, Drusilla," I said. And I repeated softly to myself—for the words had fallen on my heart, cool and still as dew on Hermon,—“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

“Is he an old man, this teacher ? An Essene, perchance ? They do many good works.”

“I know not. No ; he is not old. He is about your age, Judas.”

“Where lives he ? ”

“In Nazareth ; he is a carpenter’s son.”

“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ? ” I asked scornfully. “Your great teacher, then—he who says such beautiful words, heals the sick, raises even the dead to life,—is but a carpenter’s son, of Nazareth ! ”

“Yet some say he is the son of God. I know not. A few young men follow him, fisher-folk and the like. I only know of him that his words are very beautiful. I knew a maid who comes from Nazareth. She says he was born in Bethlehem ; an angel told his mother that he was to be Messiah. And they say he had no earthly father, but God was his father.”

“What nonsense is this, Drusilla? It is an old fable; you have heard these Romans speak of their gods. Their Jupiter turned himself to a shower of gold once, and wed a damsel. No, no; he is just a man like other men. How can he give me healing and forgiveness?”

“Nevertheless, go and see him, Judas, and judge. Hear what he says. They speak wonderful things about his birth and life. When he was a child, he was taken into Egypt, because Herod killed the babies, fearing him.”

“If Saul killed his thousands, Herod killed his tens of thousands,” I said. “My father brought me to the city when I was a little child to see his bier. When he was dying, in fear and savage fury—for he died most horribly,—he ordered that many should be slain, in order that there might be weeping at, if not for, his death. So a few babies—— But say on, Drusilla.”

“I tell you but what I have heard. . . . Herod was frightened because it was said he should be king; and a star guided kings to his manger.”

“His manger? I understand not.”

“He was born, they say, in a manger. But when he went to Egypt——”

“ A fine teacher, this ; a Galilean carpenter, born in a manger. But say on.”

“ Dragons bowed to him ; lions and leopards adored him ; roses of Jericho blossomed wherever he set foot ; palm-trees bent to give him dates. All the idols in the land of Egypt fell prostrate in the sands at his coming. And when he was a boy, he performed many wonderful works. He carried water in his robe ; he made clay birds fly at the clapping of his hands. The other boys made clay birds, too, but they could not make them fly ; he did. He turned his schoolmates into kids ; they say he struck dead boys who offended him or ran against him. But that I do not believe. Now listen, Judas ; are you listening ? Once, in the month of Adar it was, Jesus assembled his playmates, and they strewed their garments on the ground for him to sit on, and stood to his right and to his left. And on his head they put a wreath of flowers, and a bulrush in his hand for sceptre ; and when boys came near, they seized them by force, and said, ‘ Come, adore your king ; and then pass upon your way.’ ”

“ I should have liked that,” I said. “ For once I, too, made a boy kneel and worship me. And when he turned to strike me, I killed him !”

“ Oh, Judas ! ”

“ And this teacher—this Messiah—how lives he ? You say he cares little for wealth, and his father is but a carpenter.”

“ I suppose he, too, lives by his craft. But very often he goes with the fishermen on the lakes. One of his disciples, I think, has boats and hired servants, and what they catch they sell in Jerusalem. Perhaps he shares in the draught. One told me he was also a shepherd ; he spoke of his sheep. Oh, Judas, I am sure he is a great teacher, and could help you. Will you not go and hear him ? ”

“ I will go,” I said.

IV

THE next morning, very early, I left the palace by a wicket-gate, which one of the porters opened for my exit. The Temple bells were ringing their first morning peal ; smoke and flame rose from the altar of burnt-offering ; I saw the captain of the Temple guard mount with the priests to the battlements. The sun rose fiery red over the mountains south-east of Jerusalem ; I knew that the vast, desolate land I had gazed upon on my first coming lay red under its rays, to the farthest peak of Moab, the farthest Edomite valley, the remotest shore of the Dead Sea. “ *Barkai ad chebron !* ” (“ The light has reached Hebron ”) came the cry, as, hoary-headed, the mount grew visible through the roseate mist. “ To your duties, priests ! To your duties ! Levites, to your pulpits ! To your stands, Israelites ! ” rang out the harsh summons. From the castle of Antonia came the blare of bugles. The booth-keepers of

Beth-Hini took their places ; merchants poured through the Xystus Gate.

I had business to do first in the city. I had a friend, a young Levite, by name Abiathah ; he came from Kerioth. I doubted whether he would see me ; but he had heard nothing of my excommunication. I asked him how it might be removed.

“ I suppose by repentance and submission,” he said. “ But you should see a rabbi more learned in the Law than I, Judas ; I am but young. It is a terrible thing to have incurred such a fate ; were it known that I spoke to you even, I might incur censure.”

“ I care little for their censures and their curses,” I said loftily. “ I asked in case I chose to take their pardon. There are Romans and Greeks also in Syria.”

“ To be sure, to be sure. But one’s own folk are one’s true friends. What cares Rome for us Jews ? It is a terrible thing to be shut out of Israel. When I was a boy, and my mother told me of the scapegoat, with the red fillet round its horns, standing among the bones by the bleak sea, perchance, or in the desert places, I wept bitterly. I was so sorry for the poor goat, shut out, when the others were happy in their meadows. And you may not enter the

synagogue, I suppose ; that must be terrible also, to be shut out from God's worship. Not to hear the singing—not to see the angel with the veil over his face reading the blessed Law——”

“ My own heart can be my synagogue ; I can be my own angel,” I said. “ Yet is it inconvenient to have folk turn the back ; I like to be on fair terms with all, good Abiathah. Thus you are my friend ; but the Roman pages at the Pretorium are also my friends, and some of the soldiers.” I did not say how some of these haughty aliens treated me, in whose land they fattened.

I said good-bye to Abiathah, and started toward Nazareth. It was afternoon when I drew near ; it lies in a valley surrounded by seven hills, and was fiercely hot under the sun. The wall of hills seemed to shut in the heat. I came down the path, to meet a wild commotion. Men, women, children ran and shouted ; I soon observed the reason for the uproar.

A pariah dog—thin and ugly, with a yellow, mangy coat—rushed down the main street of the village ; its jaws were flecked with foam ; it snapped viciously to left and right. A child stumbled and fell in its path. But at that moment a burly peasant hurled first his staff,

and then a boulder, at the brute ; this was the signal for stone after stone to be hurled ; while I looked, and before any fear had time to seize me, the beast lay dead in the centre of the street.

The people clustered round him.

“ He had a lot of blood in him, the creature,” said one man.

“ By Abraham’s beard, a mangy cur,” said another, turning him with his foot.

“ See his lolling tongue,” said a woman. “ All foamy and bloody—how horrible ! ” ; and she shuddered. “ Another moment, Aaron, and he would have mauled that child. And a bite from such a creature is like sin ; it works and works in secret, and at last brings death.”

A young man came up. He had his back to me ; I could not see his face very distinctly, though when he glanced round for a moment I saw that he had a beard. He was of a slight figure, and bore himself with a certain easy grace and dignity. Yet I saw he was but a simple villager.

He looked down at the body, lying in its slime and blood.

“ Yet what beautiful white teeth it has,” he said. “ How strong, and how evenly they are set ! ”

“ Strong enough, master,” said a woman ; “ you would see beauty in camel dung or a cow’s dug. Good for us that the beast was killed in time. Fine teeth, indeed ! ”

I passed on to the centre of the village. Beautiful in its surroundings, set in a cup of the hills among figs and olives, it was but a mean place. There was a little synagogue, a battered fountain, round which clustered a few idlers, and a score or so of houses made of rough white stone. Doves flew everywhere, and lighted in the road for pulse among the refuse ; I saw now and again the bright blue of the roller bird. A yoke of oxen, dragging faggots, were in the street.

Some girls were at the fountain, drawing water ; two of them, as they passed with their buckets, looked at me boldly, and laughed. They were well built, strong, and not ill favoured ; carrying themselves very erect.

I came to the carpenter’s shop where Jesus worked. It was a pleasant, low, white building, under a great fig-tree ; doves fluttered and cooed about the lattice. When I entered, a woman, holding a child by the hand, was in the shop. An elderly man, bald and grey-headed, worked at the bench. He had a simple, rather foolish face. He seemed very clumsy at his task ; I

thought once I heard him swear under his breath.

Suddenly a young man entered from the street, and I saw that it was he who had spoken of the dead dog.

He came to the other's help.

He was about my own age, but of slighter build. I marked him particularly, wondering whether this were he. He had long hair, brown, and slightly curled ; a beard not much grown ; his face was of a pale olive. Suddenly he glanced up from his father, and looked at me. Our eyes met.

He had the most wonderful eyes, I think, I had ever seen. They were dark, soft, lit with strange hidden lights ; they seemed to hold sadness, sternness, yet withal a great kindness. The woman was still in the shop ; I could not say then what I wished to say. He asked my business.

A rough wooden toy lay near ; a grotesque doll made of black wood, and representing a negro slave. The lips were red and thick ; the teeth marked out in white ; and the hair was of camel hair.

I took it up, asked the price, and purchased it. The shop was partitioned by a wooden screen or trellis into two rooms. That in

which I stood had a painted bench running against the wall ; a great red water-jar of earthenware ; mats and stools ; and the bench at which the carpenter was working. Doves fluttered even in the shop itself, and on the sill of the one small window, which framed a sky of deepest blue.

From behind the trellis came a woman, with a face very sweet and gracious—and, it seemed to me, not a little sad. She had very large, soft, motherly eyes. “ Oh, Jesus, have you sold the toy you made ? ” she asked.

“ Yes, mother, I have just sold it for eight prutahs.”

She stooped over the bench, and kissed her husband on his bald, shining head. With one hand he brushed the kiss petulantly away. The other, holding the tool, slipped ; his hand was cut. “ Clumsy fingers,” she said, laughing. “ You should keep still when I kiss you.”

The woman and the child went out.

Jesus took up some shavings from the bench. He cut one with a knife into a grotesque face with a long nose ; he pencilled in eyes ; and, running out, gave it to the child. He came back, laughing. I reflected, “ Had I thought, I would have given the doll to the child.” Because there was I dandling the absurd thing,

with no use for it on God's earth, it having served my purpose in staying until we were alone. "Perhaps you will keep this for another child," I said.

"That is very kind of you," answered the young man who had been called Jesus. He put it aside; once more his father was in difficulties, and called him to the bench. I waited.

Jesus bent over the work; in a minute or two he stood erect, and straightened himself.

He stretched out his arms, and his shadow fell on the white wall of the room.

"Mary," said her husband, "do you know what Jesus' shadow on the wall reminds me of? Look at it; the body straight, the head, the two arms stretched out. The thief who was crucified on Golgotha, the last time I was in Jerusalem. It looks just like that."

It seemed to me that Mary shivered. "Don't, Joseph," she said. "'Tis a horrid fancy. To me it is more like the angel blessing the people, and his hair is the veil. Do you not see?"

"It is more like the cross," said her husband, stubbornly.

I turned to Jesus.

"You are Jesus the teacher?" I asked.

"Men call me so."

“ If I could speak with you—here, or in the village street.”

He gazed at me without speech for a full minute ; sadness, sternness, and yet a great kindness withal, in those dark and wonderful eyes. But for them I think perhaps the face would really have been effeminate and perhaps insignificant. Then he went out into the village street, I with him.

It basked in dazzling heat ; the smell of the offal in the kennels, where lean dogs, a sorry goat, and poultry sought their food, rose intolerably.

Great teacher or no, Jesus seemed without much honour in his own village. Once a man flung a stone after him with a contemptuous taunt. In the centre of the street the carcase of the dog still lay ; the blood and foam had dried in the fierce sun. Two women passed ; one of them was she who had chid him for his praise of the dog. As we came near, a cloud of unclean flies rose from the body, and a vulture, its head raw and bloody.

“ What a pretty red that vulture’s head is ! ” the woman said. “ And what a lovely green those flies ! ”

“ He put the evil eye on my little Naomi but yesterday,” said the other. “ He kissed and

spoke to her and praised her, without spitting or blowing, or any charm. The rulers ought to interfere with those who set themselves against the wisdom of our fathers."

"They will fling him down the precipice in earnest next time, if he cares not," said the first woman.

A passing girl tossed her head. "Clack, clack, clack," she said, putting out her tongue. "You old cows don't know a man from a mule. Folks don't like him because he tells them what they ought to hear, and don't want to hear."

Jesus said nothing, and did not even look round. I thought, "A man would have had his answer ready; he would not be afraid of two old women's tongues. And a man would have flung back that stone."

I walked beside him for some way without speaking, but he had sunk in my esteem. Just a young rustic—no more—who made toys for children in his spare time, and whom his fellow-villagers did not much love. But I had to speak; and at last, scarce knowing what I said, I asked: "Are you the Master of whom I have heard in Jerusalem? A Jewish maid in Pontius Pilate's household told me there was a Jesus of Nazareth, who preached good tidings, healed the sick, and did many wonderful works. Are you he?"

Because you are younger than I thought ; most of the rabbis I have seen have been old men. She said also that you spoke of a coming kingdom, and had raised the dead. Is this so ? ”

“ Men say this of me,” he said. And all the time his eyes were upon me ; kind, yet penetrating ; seeming to read my inmost thoughts and most secret history. I could not meet them.

“ And preach forgiveness of sins,” I said.

“ To those who will take forgiveness. All will not take it. Some seek it and find it, and fling it from them. A man was on the seashore seeking a stone which should turn all things to gold. An iron girdle was round his waist, and he picked up stones, touched the iron with them, and anon threw them away. And when evening drew nigh, he looked at his girdle, and it was turned to gold ; the stone had verily been in his hands. But he had flung it from him ; and he sought it afterwards earnestly and with tears. . . . You have read the Scriptures.”

“ Yes, Master.”

“ ‘ Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.’ ”

“ I have read.”

"This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Still I hesitated. I wanted peace ; oh, how dearly ; and they said of him that he knew the way in which it might be found. Yet my spirit chafed at baring itself to one little older than myself ; a village carpenter. His eyes, mild, yet searching, kind, yet, it seemed, judging, accusing, condemning, stirred in me that which was turbulent and rebellious in my nature. I must stoop to take this forgiveness—then I would not stoop, but carry the misery of my sin.

He turned, and said, "Let us go in."

"Stay, Master," I said. "I have committed a great sin." The lonely agony and terror of another night unshriven was before me. Because often and often, when I was alone, fear held me in its clutches ; I woke sweating from frightful dreams. And even in the crowded streets a sudden touch, a sudden, unfamiliar voice, set my heart beating wildly. "I—I need forgiveness," I said in a low voice. "Day and night I cannot rest."

"What sin is great, what little ? " he asked.

"I have committed the greatest," I said. And in a low voice, "I have killed my father."

He did not answer, but looked on the ground. We were now on a narrow path leading from

the village to the summit of the hill that looks down upon Nazareth. Tamarisks and wild capers grew by the pathside ; here and there rose myrtle or olive ; burnt clay hovels used by vine-dressers and herdsmen whose work lay among those hills stood at frequent intervals. We reached the crest ; the cool evening breeze fanned our hot cheeks. And before us spread a view so glorious that I stood for a minute spellbound and breathless.

Beyond low mountains, tier after tier rounded or jagged—taking on the evening blue—rose Carmel, precipitous above a purple sea. Here and there on the water were the lights of fishing-boats, like tiny silver bells hung on curtains of purple and of violet. A lake of green bordered with trees, the Plain of Jezreel spread vacant yet luxurious, and to the east, covered with young trees in their light foliage, rose Tabor. Just beyond this the white road wound towards Damascus. A caravan halted as we watched ; we could see tiny figures of shrouded men watering their camels. And snow-capped Hermon towered in the distance among the Galilean mountains.

It was near the hour of sunset.

From a cave in the hillside, a beggar, naked, his white beard sweeping his hairy breast,

came whining for alms. Jesus gave him two prutahs.

“Who is your father? That man is your father,” he said to me. “To kill him is to kill your father.”

And then he said, “The blow you struck did not kill your father. He was killed by the hatred in your heart.” His voice grew very soft and kind. “Your sin is forgiven you ; go, and sin no more.”

My heart flamed ; “Who art thou,” it was on my lips to say, “who on earth hast power to forgive sins ?” Yet even at that moment a sense of ineffable peace and ease stole over me. It was, I say, at the solemn hour when the long, parched day merges into soft night. Faint sounds rose from the village ; and among them the sound of a distant bell. From a vineyard in the valley came the song of husbandmen ; a cooper hammered at a water-butt, and the noise of the blows rose metallic. . . . Royal purple and gold, silver and violet, saffron and emerald and palest rose, the colours of sunset spread over sea and plain and hill. I could not understand ; yet as some traveller comes out of the arid plain to the snow and cool breezes of Hebron, so I came to a place of great quietness and refreshment ; and knew indeed—though

how, I knew not—that my sin was covered. There was to be no more heart-break ; no more restless nights were to keep me tossing to the cock-crow. In my bravado I had made light to Abiathah of the censure of the synagogue ; yet had it troubled me not a little. The power and tradition of the Law are so great. So many generations have listened to it, obeyed it, trembled before it. In spite of my exile, our ancient faith seemed in my very blood ; the colour of our long history had saturated my mind. How vivid, how glorious a progress since Abram and Sarah watched their flocks and herds from the open tent ! And, through war and wandering, pestilence, captivity, joyful return and peace, the sure guiding hand of God ! To be shut out from Israel—shunned of men for one's sin—was no light fate. Yet I had, in my pride, hardened myself ; I had cursed Moses Meir with a curse more bitter than his own ; I had said in my heart, “ I will wash my hands of them, as they of me.”

Yet I had suffered.

And now this even fell from me lightly ; was I outcast ? So be it ; the Shekinah cast its rays in my heart.

“ Master, Master ! ” I cried, and, young and ardent, I, who had in secret called no man master

or lord, bent to kiss the hem of his garment.
 "I would be thy disciple."

"He that will be my disciple," he said,
 "must take up his cross, and deny himself,
 and follow me."

"I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,"
 I said, for I was still young and hot-blooded.

"And leave all . . ." he said, looking at me
 until I felt that I flushed under his glance.

"I will leave all and follow thee," I said.

He looked at me, hard and long. Again that
 sense of destiny, great, awful, infinitely sad,
 swept over me. His glance seemed to read
 my very soul ; all that I thought, all that I had
 done, seemed to lie bare before him.

"Come, let us go hence," he said.

"I will leave all and follow thee ; I will leave
 all and follow thee." The words I had spoken
 rang and echoed in my heart. All ? My place
 in Pilate's household, the little vineyard I had
 bought near Kerioth, Drusilla, my hope of ad-
 vancement, my great dreams of kingship ?

All ?

/ Strange, the spell he cast over me as over
 others.

In the deep silence, we turned to descend
 the hill. A great surrender—a great surrender,
 this that I had made.

The hills were aflame, sunset running from crest to crest in a blaze of living fire. And beyond Carmel, the sun, a ball of red gold, dropped to the sea. One could almost seem to hear in the stillness the hiss of its fall as of molten metal. . . . I stumbled, and put my hand out to a rock for steadiness. And with that I gave a cry, checked almost instantly. My hand was red as blood !

It was but the ruddy glow of sunset, bathing all around us. But—how it was or why, I knew not ; with the nearness of the dark, a bitter coldness seemed to have fallen on the land—I shuddered.

Jesus looked at me ; in his eyes again I felt that sense of destiny, infinitely sad, perhaps infinitely terrible.

We came down the hillside in the darkness.

V

THE mother of Jesus came to the door of the shop, and called into the vacant street, "Jesus ! Jesus ! Your meal is ready."

Her voice reached us as we came to the foot of the slope.

"I am coming, mother !" Jesus called back. And he asked me to sup with them.

It was the simple meal of poor and simple folk. There were Joseph and Mary, Justus and Simon and Judas and James ; two daughters also, Esther and Thamar. They talked and laughed a great deal. They gobbled their food, making ugly noises. Jesus sat next his mother ; very often they exchanged glances, and once I saw him press her hand. Pilate used silver spoons at his table ; here, after our own custom, we dipped our bread in the dishes standing on the basket-work tray. We had stews of rice and *burgul* (cracked wheat). Now Joseph and his other sons and daughters were peasant folk ;

they ate, I say, like pigs, and squabbled over the last portions. But Jesus and his mother seemed to me quite different. Then *ibriek* and *tusht* (pitcher and ewer) were brought, and we poured the water on one another's hands.

I could not tell where lay this difference ; it seemed to me that there was tragedy in their look ; a brooding, wistful sadness ; an expectancy of some destiny high and sad. . . . I do not know ; what I was myself to learn and suffer may have coloured this early memory.

I told them stories of Pilate, and life in Jerusalem ; I was speaking of my own home at Kerioth, when Jesus sprang up. He ran to the yard, and suddenly I heard a most fearful spitting and squalling. He came in with a hand badly scratched, and in the hand a sparrow which he had snatched from the claws of a cat. His eyes and face were flaming ; but soon the eyes softened, and he smoothed the bloodstained down of the tiny body.

"Two sparrows are sold for a farthing," he said, as he stroked the soft feathers gently, "yet not one falls to the ground without the knowledge of God."

"Will it die ? Poor little bird," said Mary, bending over him.

"No, it is well again," said Jesus ; and the bird flew through the lattice.

When he spoke—but he spake little, though the others a great deal,—it was of birds, and flowers, and sheep and vineyards, and such simple things as one saw around one on every hand. Yet it seemed to me that I had heard none other speak as he spake.

Somehow, while he was speaking, he seemed to throw open casements through which flooded the glory of a new and brighter sunlight.

I stayed until a late hour, and rose at last, reluctantly. But Jesus said, "I go a-fishing. Will you follow me to-night?"

"Master, whithersoever thou goest," I said.

We went out ; night enfolded us like a soft, spangled cloak of violet. In the village young men and maidens were still about the fountain ; and a boy ran up. "Jesus, Jesus," he cried, "may I follow thee? Dost thou go fishing? I should like to come fishing with thee. Simeon my elder brother hates thee : he was among those who tried to throw thee over the precipice ; but I am thy friend, and love thee."

"Because I gave thee a boat," said Jesus, smiling. "That kind of love is not worth much, boy. No, no, Reuben ; thou art but twelve, and beginning to learn thy father's

trade. When thou art full-grown man, we shall see. Listen, thy mother calls thee to bed."

Beyond the village the road was very lonely. Now and then we passed a peasant who hailed us with his *Jas, Jas*, or his Good evening ; or now a wild desert Arab, tall and swarthy, moving noiselessly through the night. We descended at last a narrow, rocky path. In the day this countryside is very beautiful ; full of orchards which clothe the hillsides with pink blossom. Now we saw only cliffs, black and forbidding. The lake lay like a mirror of dark metal, reflecting the stars.

The path dropped suddenly to the beach. Here stood a rough hut built of boulders and of old lichened and shell-encrusted timbers. The roof was pitched. I entered with Jesus ; a lamp burned feebly within. In the hut were three or four young men, and two women, one of them with a child.

They received me with a brotherly warmth, and, I was pleased to think, some little of such deference as one who had lived in courts might expect from humbler men. " This is Peter," said Jesus ; and I saw a man older than the others, in the rough garb of a fisherman. His face was scored and battered, as by many storms ; in his ears were metal rings ; his eye-

brows were shaggy ; his hands roughened with toil. . . . The younger woman was his wife ; the elder, who was boiling water over a fire of wood and faggots mixed with camel dung, his wife's mother. A lad entered, his hair rough, and cheeks glowing from the sea-wind ; he kissed Jesus impulsively on both cheeks. Somehow at his entry the cabin seemed to take on a new atmosphere of life. He was lithe and agile, quick in all his movements ; his eyes shone in the half-darkness. This was John. In one corner were Thomas and Nathaniel, mending a net. In the cabin were wicker baskets, creels, nets, and oars. " It grows late," said John at last. " Master, shall we to the boat ? "

" We go a-fishing for fish to-night, Judas," said Peter, clapping his great hand roughly on me ; " to-morrow, perchance, for men."

We went out ; a boat, much used and mended, lay on the beach. Under the silver moon we fished, and for long hours caught nothing. But towards morning the Master told us to cast nets altogether, and we cast, and they were filled almost to breaking.

Now I wondered in my heart if this were one of his mighty works ; or if he had seen the shoal beneath the water ; of if by happy chance he

had spoken. . . . I wondered. And always to the end—almost to the end—this doubt was with me ; *did* he indeed heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out evil spirits ? He seemed to do so, yet it was incredible ; he was a man like unto myself.

We came to land over the scarce-breathing lake, in the soft hush of the dusk preceding dawn. Slowly, beach and cliff, sand and trees grew out of darkness. The influence of the hour seemed upon us all ; we spoke almost in whispers. But Peter, as the sun broke through, lifted up his voice in a gusty song.

“ Peter, thou art still pagan,” said Jesus ; but he laughed.

“ By my head am I not,” said Peter ; “ I will sing you a psalm of David.” And he broke out into :—

“ ‘ The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. . . . In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it ; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.’ ”

The others in the boat joined their voices to his, while the sun mounted the heavens in splendour. . . . How glorious these psalms, which the Chief Musician rendered dim years ago in the ears of Israel ! Phrase and phrase passed through my mind ; “ God is gone up with a shout ; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.” “ All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.” “ He bowed the heavens also, and came down ; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly ; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place ; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.”

Splendid and noble words ! I was glad that these simple men knew and sang them still ; not utterly was I cut off from the congregation. I had thought perchance this new teacher, breaking with old tradition and old usage, might reject all this. . . . In the country places where is no synagogue of wood or stone, men worship sometimes in the woods, by the shore ; I wondered whether we should do this, building our altar of wood or stones or sand. . . .

We ate our breakfast on the beach, cooking the fish on the stones, and Jesus first giving

thanks. "Father, we thank Thee for our daily bread," he said, looking to the blue sky as if there he could see God.

I thought, "He is a good man, or a good actor." I looked forward happily to the life before me with these simple folk. In truth, I was tired of cities, of glitter and pageant, of the monotony of the old life. In the Pretorium the pages would soon be stirring, swearing at having to rouse themselves from sleep to their tasks. I should have to ward off cuff or blow ; to be silent under a reprimand from the master of the pages ; hating him the while with his oiled hair, and ringed hands and domineering voice. Here we were all as brothers.

On the pebbles lay our pile of silvery fish, some still living. We picked out and threw back a few sheat-fish which had been left among them. "A good haul, a good haul !" said John excitedly. "There are twenty bream, nigh a score also of carp, and perch too many for counting."

"Little enough for a night's work," said Peter, grumbling.

"Ay, but at one draught. Master, may our Heavenly Father send such an one of men to-day !" He meant—in that strange turn of speech which grew to irritate me by its

repetitions and its uncouthness—that in the day we were to fish for the souls of men. It was what their Lord had promised them.

Like him, they spoke much in parables ; they were his flock, his vines, his husbandmen, his servants. My new companions were quite unlike those of Pilate's household ; they spoke of other and sober matters ; there was no lewdness. Once Peter broke his net, and I heard from him such foulness as one hears in the lowest kennels of Jerusalem. But John rebuked him sharply ; so sharply indeed that Jesus rebuked John.

“ Master, he is thy disciple now ; should he use such words ? The clean air stinks with them. And thou hast said, “ Let thy conversation be yea and nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. . . . ’ And again, ‘ Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is His footstool, neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ’ ”

“ I have said also, Judge not,” said Jesus. “ Peace, John ! ” ; and he pointed to a fir-tree in which were doves, and spake a parable about peace. But to Peter he said, “ In the drag-net we found fish bad and good, and the bad we cast forth. But now, thou sangest David's psalm ;

and here after it come the sheat-fish. Throw them away, Peter, and keep only the good."

Thus we journeyed to Capernaum, where was Peter's house.

* * * * *

I was surprised to see a dwelling so large, though it was plainly built. Other disciples were already met. There were Andrew, Peter's brother, and James ; Philip and Bartholomew ; Thomas and Matthew ; James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus ; and Simon the Canaanite. Nearly all were young ; most were fisher-folk, but one was a publican. They were rough of speech and hand and look—save John and Thomas,—so rough, indeed, that I wondered Jesus should call his followers from the ignoble in form and bearing. He himself stood apart from them ; the marvellous beauty of his eyes stamping him as no common man. Yet it seemed to me that there was little of the kingly in his bearing. He moved and spoke quite simply ; except at rare intervals, he was but the carpenter's son of Nazareth. He had no gestures of command, spoke in no authoritative voice. . . . Ah, if I had even these men to found my kingdom !

I liked the face of Thomas ; it was sharply cut and shrewd, I thought, in feature. He and

I sat together. Now and then he spoke in low tones ; he asked me if I had yet seen any of the miracles. " No," I said ; " I have but lately become disciple."

" They are very strange," he said ; " evil cannot help him. Some seem to be healed. But they are all simple folk, ready to be persuaded. When I was a lad, a man came to our village, healing the sick. But when he was departed, lo ! the crutches were caught up again, and some took again to their beds. . . . You seem less ignorant than these others."

" I have spent my life in courts," I said, " and mixed with the great and learned. In the house of Pilate I met many scribes and poets. One I knew was writing the history of our race. But these have spent their lives among the fish-baskets."

" That is so," he said.

He told me of one miracle, the first of any note that Jesus did, at a marriage-feast in Cana. Nathaniel was *paranymph* ; he was but newly Jesus' disciple. The bridegroom was a son of Alphæus, a cousin of the Master. On a late day of the feasting, the wine became exhausted ; and Jesus turned water into wine. " But, mark you," said Thomas, " the guests must have drunken well to have exhausted all within

the house. They liked the new wine better than the old."

John, who had left the house, came running back, eager-faced. "Master, Master," he cried, "there are many folk without, waiting for your coming. Men and women, and little children. The halt, the blind, the maimed, and those possessed. . . . Wilt thou not come and heal them? Truly, as my namesake said, is God's kingdom at hand."

Jesus went out, and we followed.

In the fierce sun of mid-morning over a hundred folk clustered on the sparsely covered grass-land before the house. All seemed poor; some, as John had said, were suffering from various ills. And as Jesus appeared, rose a great cry of greeting, of joy, of hope and expectation. All spoke or cried at once. "Master, Master, heal us!" "Jesus of Nazareth, have pity on my blindness!" "Lord, Lord, restore speech and hearing to my little one!"

A tattered woman wheeled a rough, unpainted wooden cart, in which was a demoniac. He was nearly naked, and terribly emaciated; spittle covered his ragged beard; he crouched in the straw at the bottom of the cart. But as Jesus drew near, he shrank back in terror, his eyes starting. His inarticulate gibber rose to a

shriek. "Take him away, take him away!" he screamed. "Jesus of Nazareth, why tormentest thou me?" He writhed and struggled; his sinewy hands caught at his bare throat.

The clamour was deafening; on all sides appeals for help from the afflicted and their friends; some shrieking, some weeping, some whining and snuffling; while some caught at the garments of Jesus and his disciples.

But the Master turned first to the demoniac.

"Peace!" he said. And instantly the shriek turned to a whimper, like the whimper of a frightened child; and the startled, perplexed eyes turned on the healer with wonder and awe, but without fear. . . . "Take him hence," said Jesus to the woman; "the evil spirit hath come from him; he is made whole."

The woman wheeled the demoniac away.

In the few words Jesus had spoken, were, it seemed to me, majesty and dominion; he spoke them like a king. Once I was on Gennesaret, in the great gilded galley which Pilate used. His wife was on board; we were going to meet our master at the port; suddenly a great storm rose. In a few minutes the waves were mountains high. We shipped heavy seas; the galley-slaves were in terror, and panic spread through their ranks. But a young Roman officer on

board spake but a dozen words, quietly ; and instant peace fell. . . . It is strange how some men have this power ; none I have known, I think, as Jesus had it. . . .

And then, laying hands on some, speaking soothing and healing words to some—or again raising his voice in tones of authoritative power,—he restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb. It was very wonderful, though I have often heard of men having this gift. Crutches were flung aside ; the dumb shouted their blessing ; the possessed turned from shrieks of filth and blasphemy to the praise of God. Thomas was mistaken ; these things were really done, and the healed went rejoicing on their way. I thought, “ Here indeed is a master to serve. If he can do such deeds as this, all the countryside, hearing it, will follow him. Wealth will be showered upon him ; all power will be his—for, of a truth, no king wieldes such a power as this. And the great and rich will come to our doors for healing.”

It became evident, indeed, very soon that the fame of Jesus of Nazareth had spread throughout all Syria. As we walked along the grassy margin of the lake, men and women and children whose speech and garments told

us that they came from Galilee itself, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond Jordan, thronged after us. Each minute the crowd gathered, until it became a multitude. Many of them were diseased ; some were so loathsome that I wondered he allowed them to come near and touch him. And many, touching thus even stealthily, were healed ; for virtue went out of him.

Seeing the greatness of the throng, Jesus led us to a mountain by the lakeside, the multitude following ; we seated ourselves upon the grass, and, opening his mouth, he taught them.

I listened eagerly to his first discourse. Once, when Herod Antipas visited Pilate, I heard two Grecian orators address him in their turns ; I was surprised, yet not surprised, to mark how different was the oratory of Jesus of Nazareth. I say oratory ; yet I thought, " Here is no orator. It is but the village carpenter speaking to village folk." There were no gestures, or very few ; no declamation ; no passion in his speech. He spoke quietly and simply, as a friend might speak to friends. His illustrations were from quite common things. I wondered at the intentness with which the crowd listened. Were I standing in his place, I thought, with what eloquence should I sway

them ! My parables should be of marble palaces and those who dwelt within them, of glittering cohorts, of golden thrones, and gilded, cushioned barges ; I should speak of the plays I had seen acted, and copy the gestures and deportment of the actors. My spirit, always in the height or in the deep—always swayed to imitation,—rose to almost ecstasy over my imagined speech. And the quiet, undistinguished voice went on.

Quiet as it was, his voice carried to the farthest limit of the multitude. It seemed to hold them in some mystic spell ; scarce a movement stirred them. “ Blessed are the poor in spirit,” he said, “ for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Fine teaching this, thought I ; and gullible his hearers. I had looked for hints of a coming kingdom ; for words of fire and passion that should remind them of the ancient glories of Israel. . . . Thus would I have spoken. Thus would I have kindled in them some answering enthusiasm to my own. I felt half ashamed of my Master ; this plain and almost mean figure, village carpenter and nought else in his simplicity, uttering in that calm, unimpassioned

voice his paradoxes. And yet. . . . The poor to have the kingdom? The mourners to be comforted? The meek to inherit the earth? A strange teaching; a teaching that reversed all the world had taught us; yet the listeners heard eagerly. He turned everything upside down. He startled them into dumb audience; they were poor, they meek, they the mourners. But it rang false to me, wiser than these vulgar. Was the kingdom to the poor in spirit? Herod Antipas ruled in Judea; another Idumean in the north; Tiberias in Rome; Sapphirus in Emesa. I thought of that other Herod, and the cry of the populace, "It is a god's voice!" Were the mourners comforted? But why blessed? Better, surely, not to mourn. Blessed, should I have said, they who do *not* mourn. When the master of the pages lost his only daughter, he went about for weeks unconsolated. A proud, vain man, he was crushed and humbled; he seemed to look even to us for sympathy. . . . Ah, it was the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit. Yet the high priest was a proud and haughty man. Who inherited the earth? The meek?

The meek sat there humbly on their hillside, glad to think that there was a stew of rice or pulse in the pot at home, a bare room in which

they might rest their tired limbs after the day, a few prutahs for the daily task. But Rome held sway from the Northern Seas to lands under the fierce Lybian sun ; her legions tramped the roads they had made within our gates ; her eagles rose in Jerusalem and Sepphoris ; the superscription of her Emperor was on our coins ; we paid tribute. Rome was mistress of the world. Were these cohorts meek, whose arms rang on our battlements, whose sword-hilts thrust us as dirt from our own paths ? Were her Cæsars meek, with their great palaces, their garlanded triumphs, their shows and pageants, their proud and contemptuous largesses ?

“ Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and separate themselves from your company.” And then—“ Woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full—that laugh—that are spoken well of.” Indeed, a strange teaching, yet falling on eager ears and ready hearts.

Because, I say, they were the outcasts, the humble, the rejected of men. I knew many rich men in the city ; rulers, money-changers, merchants ; their faces were shining very often with happiness and satisfaction ; there was no dumb, helpless sadness in their eyes as in the eyes of these.

He said that he had come, not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it in every jot and tittle. Once, indeed, his voice rose ; his eyes flashed ; as he spoke of the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees.

I remembered what Drusilla had said.

“ Not thus,” I thought, “ will he draw the rich and great to his discourse.”

Bitterly he spoke of the hypocrites who prayed standing, that they might be seen of men, and who sounded a trumpet before them in the synagogues and in the streets when they did their alms. Neither were men to lay up treasure for themselves on earth ; nor to take heed for food, or drink, or raiment. Why, and what else had these folk to heed ? I should have liked to have seen the face of Pilate’s wife—even of Drusilla—listening to such words ! Take no heed for raiment, what ye shall put on. Pilate would have had his word to say ; his wife was a great lady.

He said, after all these things, that he had come not to destroy but to fulfil the Law ; yet it seemed to me that the strictness of the Law was fulfilled in his teaching. Men were to love their enemies ; to do good to them that despitefully used them ; to love even those who hated them ; to give to him that asked.

“Ye have heard it said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery ; but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart. . . .” A marvellous teaching of a truth ; yet not one to draw the rich man to his side.

It was in my mind—something within that often moved me, moving me—to spring up and challenge him. They listened to him ; they should listen to me, and choose between us. “This is very well, what your teacher says ; put it in practice in your imagination, if such folk as you see aught but the common things around you. You are to look on no woman to lust after her. He would make you blind or bleeding Pharisees, such as those he hates. Who gave you eyes ? Who passions ? And what man, seeing the maidens at the well, the women in the market-place daily, goes through his life without a thought of their beauty ? He teaches what is impossible. Since Adam in Eden, the male has looked at the female ; how otherwise can he even choose his bride ? Lay up no treasure on earth. . . . Then squander your goods, and let your widow and your children beg for alms. Take no heed for food or raiment. . . . Ah, but when you come

back from the hill famishing ; and the good wife, remembering the teaching, tells you there is no rice or meal in the house. . . . And her ear-rings and bangles given away, since she must take no heed to raiment. Love those that hate you. . . . A pretty teaching. It is contrary to the way in which God has created man. And so I say unto you, Woe unto ye, poor, mourners, meek, oppressed ! For blessed are the proud, for theirs are the kingdom, the earth, the comfort, and all good things of life. Fight for these things ; be not tame sheep as he would have you be. Fight for them ; and I will help you and teach you to fight ; so shall we have our kingdom in this world."

Not teaching, this of his, to draw the rich and powerful to his side. I watched his face, now kindling in a heat of scorn, now melting in a warmth of pity. And I watched also the faces of the listeners, poor folk, humble folk, folk a-weary of work and the long day. How eagerly they listened ! And the tired faces grew restful ; the sad eyes brightened with a new hope, a new enthusiasm, a new happiness. He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes ; they marvelled at his doctrine. . . .

The sermon ended, group after group spoke among themselves of his sayings ; gradually

the greater congregation melted away. One or two came near to question him. Jesus turned to us, himself now very weary. "I am an-hungred," he said; "let us go back into Capernaum." The crowd—those who had not already dispersed—thronged still about us; there were not many left; but on the roads fresh companies joined us. When we came to the house, some of the more eager pressed even into it, so that we were unable to break bread. And just then came a cry of "Room! Room!" and a chariot drawn by smoking coal-black horses scattered the throng to left and right. A Roman officer of rank alighted.

"Does the teacher of Nazareth lodge here?" he asked, in a loud, masterly voice. "I sent an embassy to him. . . . I would have word of him myself."

Eager voices answered, "Yes, he is within the house"; and he entered. Our Galileans stood servile before him.

"Jesus of Nazareth?" he said; and his hawk-like eyes scanned the faces.

"I am he," said Jesus.

"Sir, I have a servant who is sick of a palsy; sick, I fear, unto death. I have heard of your mighty works. I pray you to heal him."

"I will come and heal him," said Jesus,

"Lord," said the officer—and his bearing, I thought, grew humble before a power mighty in a world unknown to him and different from his own,—“I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. But I am a man having authority ; I say to this one, Do this, and he doeth it ; or to this, Go, and he goeth. Speak the word only, and they that serve you will go and make him whole.”

“He is a man who has been good to our people,” I heard a Jew in the throng say to his neighbour. “It was he who built the synagogue in our village.”

Jesus turned to those around him. “I have not seen such faith, no, not in Israel,” he said. “Of a truth, the children of the kingdom shall themselves be cast out, while others enter !” And to the officer, erect before him—proud Rome facing humble Galilee,—“Go thy way ; as thou hast believed, so shall it be done unto thee. Thy servant is made whole from this hour.”

It was but the day after that the Master did a still more wonderful and, indeed, one of his greatest works. Among those he had healed on coming from the mount, was a leper, who, with shaven head, covered lips, and body foul with his disease, had come crying hoarsely

to him, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Jesus touched him ; but the touch was not the light setting on of hands with which he healed so many of the sick.

"I will ; be thou clean," he said ; and, thrusting him roughly from him : "see thou say nothing to any man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded."

For the first time on the face of the Master I saw loathing and repugnance ; he looked at his soiled hand, and shuddered.

I—and many there—marvelled that he should have touched the creature. The leper, overjoyed at his cleansing, blazoned abroad the news. Many of the people, hearing, murmured. Did their teacher, then, pollute himself by touching carrion like that—living carrion, stricken by the judgment of God for its sin ? Among those who thronged the next day about Peter's house were many with puzzled, many with sullen, some with openly antagonistic faces. Our own rabbis would stone such a being from their path. . . . And Jesus, who by a spoken word might have healed, had touched him.

I think Jesus heard the murmurs of protest and indignation, and felt that the sympathy of the throng was this day against him ; he was

very sensitive to such impressions. And perhaps because of this we left Capernaum for a while, and went to Nain, twenty-five miles distant, on the north-west slope of Jebel-el-Duhy. Our boat had been moored in a tiny creek close to the house, owing to the recent storms. In the clear air of morning, we set the russet sail, and started for the southern end of the lake. Many days of that three-year ministry during which I followed Jesus stand out in memory ; long days on the bleak and stony mountains, golden evenings among the standing corn starred with flowers, still nights spent on the moonlit waters. And this day was one to be remembered. Reeds fringed the creek ; in the clear water we could see shoals of tiny fish, silver and brown and black and grey, and kingfishers darted in quest of food. From the rocks the conies peeped, or vanished with a flash of their white scuts ; and on the bank small land-tortoises with soft eyes crept and tumbled. Solemn and rigid, a stork stood above the stream ; some children played on a shelving ridge of pebbles. We crept out to the broad bosom of the lake. Reflections of fleecy clouds moved slowly across its almost unrippled surface ; far below, through waters so often and so quickly chafed into fury, we saw the

weeds and pebbles. . . . Here and there were a few fishing-boats ; once a war-galley passed us, its glittering shields flashing in the sun, and the bronzed men singing to their oars.

Leaving the ship, we threaded the Jordan valley under the wadys of the Esdraelon. Mount Tabor rose before us. In afternoon, we reached the gates of Nain.

As for many a century past, the people of the town clustered here to talk, to barter, and to watch the new comers. A caravan of camels and asses at the moment of our arrival almost blocked the gate. But from the city came a cry of " Way, way," and much sound of lamentation ; and a melancholy cortege issued from the gate, and began to descend the narrow, rocky path.

Many people followed the bier ; among them a widow woman, mother of the boy who had died. Jesus went near. " Weep not," he said, and touched the open coffin. " Young man, I say unto thee, Arise ! "

We watched, astounded.

The lad's eyes opened slowly ; he rubbed them and looked blankly at us standing in the dazzling sun. Life seemed to flood slowly into him ; he drew himself painfully up, and

asked in bewilderment, "Where am I? What is it? Oh, what has happened?"

"It is mother, dearest," said the woman, pressing him with sobs of happy gratitude to her breast.

The news of this miracle spread far and wide. How was it done? I know not. There was no wrestling in prayer; there were no passes made; just a touch—a word spoken; the young man arose from the dead.

Now John was in prison; he who had baptized in Jordan; and he sent to Jesus two of his disciples, Manaen the Essene and another, to ask whether Jesus were the Christ who should come. "Go and show John the things you see and hear," said Jesus, "that the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are healed, the dead rise from the dead."

Yet some refused still to believe; some said that by the power of the evil one he wrought these great works. Because they repented not, he lifted up his voice against those great cities in which his mighty works were done. "Woe unto ye, Chorazin! Woe unto ye, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." But then, with a great yearning that all might

see and know, and find healing, he cried, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

There was a Pharisee who asked him once to his house to eat. And when he had sat down, a woman of the city entered and brake a great alabaster box of ointment and anointed his feet. The Pharisee said, "This woman is a sinner ; he can be no prophet, this Jesus, or he would have known what manner of woman she was, and would not have allowed her to touch him." But Jesus saw what was in his heart.

He said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee."

"Master," said the Pharisee, "say on."

"There was a certain creditor, who had two debtors ; one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he freely forgave them both ; which of the twain would love him most ? "

"Surely he who owed most," said Simon.

"Thou hast rightly judged," answered Jesus. And he turned to the woman. "Seest thou this woman ? I entered thy house, and thou gavest me no water for my feet. But she

washed them with her tears and dried them with her hair. And I say unto her, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she has loved much. Woman, thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace ! ”

This woman to whom he spoke was one Mary of Magdala, on the shore of Gennesaret. It is a miserable place of black basaltic huts, though standing in a very fertile country of corn and barley. Mary had followed us for some weeks. Lebbæus told me the story of her coming. She had lived, indeed, an evil life ; as a young girl in her native village, later in Jerusalem and in Sepphoris. She was of a dark and flashing beauty, with hair raven-black that reached, unbound, below her waist. It was at Magdala Jesus saw her. He and the disciples—I at that time was not one of them—had been through the corn ; they came to the lake, meaning to find a boat that would take them to the other side. A woman with hair dishevelled, clothes torn open to show the bare and heaving but splendid bosom, came staggering along the village street, with lads and men jeering in her train. They mocked ; they pointed ; now and then one flung stones. “ Let us stone her to death ; she merits it, the ——. It is the law that she should be put to death.” She turned

on them savagely, wildly ; I had seen her like painted as furies on a wall in Pilate's house. She shrieked curses. And as Jesus and his disciples drew near, the wretched creature looked this way and that for safety, thinking herself between two fires.

" I care for none of you ! " she screamed, shaking her fist. Her eyes flashed, said Lebbæus ; she looked gloriously handsome. " I care for none ; dogs as you are to chase a helpless woman ! You were glad enough once of my caresses, Simon, when we were lad and maid together. And now you join with the rest. . . . Let me pass ; let me pass, I say ! " Her voice was thick as if she had been drinking ; she tore madly at her dress and hair. " Ay, you can look, you can look," she shouted ; " I was good to look at once—as clean a maid as walked like Ruth among the corn, until you men spoilt me. . . . And now you fling your stones."

" The woman has a devil," cried a lad to Jesus.

" She is full of devils," said another.

" Master, bid them to come out of her."

Jesus stood in her path, and regarded her with a kind compassion.

" What is thy name ? " he asked.

" What is that to thee ? Have I not enough

tormentors ? Let me pass." She called him by an ugly name, and tried to thrust him aside.

" Her name is Mary," said one standing by.

" It is the name, then, of my mother," said Jesus. In a loud voice, he called upon the evil spirits to come from her. The woman broke into a torrent of blasphemy, oaths, and filth ; but it stopped suddenly, and her hand clutched her throat. Her face, said Lebbæus, grew hideous and distorted ; her eyes almost started from her head. Foaming, she fell to the ground, her limbs moving convulsively. Again Jesus spoke ; she rose, bewildered ; came forward quite quietly, and bent to kiss his hand. Since then she had been among his followers. . . . The common people loved him, and heard him gladly. But was it of such as these he was to found his kingdom ? Of fisher-folk, and lepers, and peasants, and women of the city ? Few of the rich, few of the great, few of the noble, followed him.

I thought of our long day together in the ship. Young men all, fisher-folk to seeming—yet more than fisher-folk ; men banded together in the joy of youth to fight, to conquer, and at last enjoy. Against us, the Pharisees and rulers of the synagogues, hardened by prejudice and tradition ; against us, the iron

power of Imperial Rome. We had sunned ourselves on the deck ; trimmed our sail ; taken our simple meal—fished ; sung our snatches of hymn and country song. And happily the hours passed.

But the kingdom seemed very far away.

VI

JESUS now went through the land of Galilee, visiting every city and village, and preaching the tidings of his kingdom—this kingdom which seemed to me now quite unlike that for which we had all looked. It was a kingdom of words and deeds ; a vague, spiritual kingdom of righteousness on earth and happiness hereafter.

I confess that I was disappointed. Lately I had spoken much with John ; he was more ardent, less rough and coarse than our companions. He had made himself tablets of thin parchment, and spent many hours, sometimes in the house, sometimes when we were among the hills or on the sea, in writing down what Jesus said. “ Is he then Messiah, our Master ? ” I asked once. “ John, thinkest thou he is Messiah ? For him we looked for should surely have made his kingdom here on earth, a very kingdom not of dreams ; his throne set up in Zion, his banner where the Roman eagles

stand. Such a king could I gladly serve and follow. There was a Judas once, who cleansed the Temple, cleared the courts thereof 'where the shrubs grew as in a forest,' and on a new altar sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise. Such an one could I myself be. . . . But his kingdom seems not of this world."

John was silent for a minute ; then his face turned towards me, glowing. " You have read the Talmud ? There was a maiden who had a lover, and he went to the wars. But he came not back, and many reproached her, saying, ' He will come no more for ever.' She wept ; but in secret she read the letters in which he promised to return, and, reading them, was comforted. And her lover came again. ' How didst thou stay thy heart during my long absence ? ' he asked. ' And how knewest thou I should return ? ' ' I read in thy letters thy promise,' she said. . . . And we have read in our letters that Messiah should come ; those letters which Isaiah and the great prophets wrote for our hope and consolation. In tears, in weariness, in exile, in sadness and bitterness of heart, we read. But we believed that he would come. We believed that what was whispered in Eden, shouted in desert places and on the mountain-tops by rugged men of God, was really true,

though the years passed and passed. Judas, I believe indeed that Jesus is our Messiah ; and our eyes and none other shall see the glorious prophecies of Israel fulfilled."

The twelve went with Jesus on this long journey ; and with us Mary Magdalene and Susanna, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward. Mary was of a radiant and flashing beauty, I say ; but the others long past youth, and ill-favoured. They ministered to Jesus daily. And so we passed through the land, staying at houses of friendly folk. And everywhere he healed the sick, and cast out unclean spirits.

But I loved better than to be in the crowded streets where the clamorous, loathsome people clustered, to go with him and our little company to the lonely fields and hillsides ; where he taught from the many flowers, the birds, the trees, the beasts of labour. In a field we saw a sower casting seed ; he spake then of seed falling by the wayside and trodden down ; of tares choking the good corn ; of stony ground and ground that brought forth much fruit. Many parables he taught from the wheat-fields. Or again in a house the woman would bring a candle to light us to our beds ; and he would tell us that, just as the candle was set on a

candlestick, and not hidden, so nothing should be hid, but all that was done come into knowledge. His eyes seemed always to wander in search of incidents in the life around us ; did the woman of the house, making bread in the oven, mix leaven with the meal, here was a likeness to his kingdom ; did a man dig in his field, 'twas one seeking hidden treasure ; or when we cast nets into the sea, he spake of the draw-net which drew good and bad together, and at the end the angels casting out the bad as we flung dead and stinking fish back. . . .

We were in the ship one day when a great tempest rose, as often happened suddenly on these waters. Other little ships were in our company, and the waves rose mountains high. As the water filled our vessel, some cried in terror, " Master, save us ; we perish. . . . " Jesus stood up in the ship ; he had been sleeping in the hinder part on a pillow when they woke him. But he spake not.

" Master, Master, carest thou not if we perish ? "

He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, " Peace, be still. " And instantly there was a great calm, scarce a ripple now on the blue surface.

We came to the country of the Gergesenes, on the other side of the lake, and suddenly from

one of the rocky cavern tombs of the Wady-Semak came two demoniacs, one of whom rushed upon us with fierce cries.

His body was foul and cut with knives ; on his limbs were broken shackles.

“ Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit,” cried Jesus.

But the demoniac cried, “ What have I to do with thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the Most High God ? I adjure Thee by God that Thou torment me not.”

Jesus asked, “ What is thy name ? ”

“ My name is Legion,” said the man—or the fiends within the man,—“ for we are many.”

Now not far off upon the mountain-side were two thousand swine feeding, and the spirits besought Jesus to let them enter in. Jesus suffered him not ; but told him to go home to his friends, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him, and how He had had compassion. As he had felt loathing at the touch of the leper he had healed, so now, I think, Jesus would not have one polluted by his life among the tombs in his company. The disciples prated often of the boundless charity of the Master ; yet there were limits, it seemed to me, to those bounds ; he healed the leper, but drove him roughly and with

disgust away ; he would not let the man who had been possessed stay in his fellowship.

Yet truly he was a Great Physician ! A woman, touching but the hem of his garments, was cured of an issue of blood which she had had twelve years. Was there virtue in his very apparel ? I wondered much about this miracle. Where lay the power, which I had no doubt now that he possessed ?

We had crossed the lake again ; there came to us now Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, imploring the Master to heal his little daughter, who lay at the point of death. But before we reached the house, from which came sounds of minstrelsy and wailing, men came to Jairus, saying, " Why troublest thou the Master ? Thy daughter is dead."

Jesus entered the house, where the little maid, but twelve years old, lay still in death. " She is not dead, but sleepeth," cried Jesus ; and then, when many laughed scornfully, said to her, " Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise." The mourners, who had been making the scene hideous with their wailings, rocking, wavings of handkerchiefs, ceased in wonder and contempt. Not dead, but sleeping ? We could see that she was dead ; the mirror had been put to her mouth, and she breathed no longer ;

her heart was still. . . . I, too, was incredulous. But the child sat up, and a minute later was nestling in her father's arms.

We came back to his own country ; but here he did no mighty works. Now this was a strange thing ; where people knew him as the carpenter's son of Nazareth, he had no power. . . . Yet had I seen him with my own eyes raise the dead, heal the leper, cast out the evil spirits, restore sight to the blind. More marvellous—that wind and waves obeyed him. I think this of all his works the most wonderful ; that so great a tempest should be lashed by a few words into submission. Some day, I thought, we shall enter into our kingdom of this world ; he who can conquer the sea can rule mankind. But in his own land, I say, people believed him not ; many of them hated him ; and at Nazareth they had once sought to take his life.

Soon after our return, he called the twelve together, and sent us out by twos to preach the gospel of his kingdom. He spoke to us about our work, giving us power to cast out unclean spirits and heal sickness. " Was he a God, to do this ? " I wondered, for who but God could delegate such powers ? I felt no change within me ; no new force—yet longed to see if he had

spoken truth. Ah, how should I wield this power, and to what advantage ! Not that men should speak of me throughout the countryside, or fawn upon me in gratitude. But, with these gifts, all that I had coveted might be mine. Half of his goods would Jairus have given to have his little daughter healed and merry in his house again. Or, if any opposed me, I could crush them now ; if evil spirits could be sent into a herd of swine, why not into men ? I listened eagerly.

We were to go out and preach to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, avoiding the Gentiles and the Samaritans. We were to be brought before governors and kings. He had come, he said, to bring a sword on earth, and not peace. This was a strange saying ; yet I think I understood. Men fight and die for precious stones, and will not fight or die for paste. If he had really brought them good tidings, by and by, when they began to know, they would fight among themselves for its possession. And so he was to divide households, setting father against son, brother against brother. Many strange things, difficult to understand, he told us. He that lost his life was to save it ; he that saved it, to lose it. A strange teaching, turning everything the other way of nature. . . . And,

all the time, I was thinking, "That is true ; I do not think that is true ; how much better should I have said that." My mind framed words better, because less common and less familiar than his. He preached but to fisher-folk and to the poor ; I would teach the rich, the great, the powerful. Pilate—Herod Antipas himself—should hear of my mighty works, and worship me.

No ; we would stand side by side, I and Jesus ; he not greater than I, I not greater than he.

When he had finished teaching, we went our several ways. Lebbæus and I were to go to Zelzar first, and through that district. It was but a tiny village of a dozen houses. Lebbæus was one of the youngest of the disciples ; a little, foxy fellow, very talkative, but not unlikable. His talk annoyed me ; it was like a parrot's chatter, and there was "Good-day to you" to all we passed. He had a trick of mimicking the Master even in the manner of his speech ; even to the speaking of parables, which were often very foolish. He made sheep and asses and camels talk. There was one long story he had of cat and dog and ape. "Now mark that ass, my good brother," he would say, "this is what he tells me."

“ He is not the only ass who talks,” I answered curtly.

We came by a cemetery on a bare, rocky hillside. Here, as I had seen once before, hyenas burrowed among the graves. It was a bleak and desolate place, long disused ; such a place as the owl and dragon and bittern and satyr haunt. Nettles and weeds grew tall. And suddenly, with horrid cries, a demoniac ran from among the tombs.

“ We have power to cure all manner of disease, and to cast out unclean spirits,” said Lebbæus. “ Now see, Judas ; I will restore that man to his right mind. It shall be my first miracle.”

He cried loudly, “ Evil spirits, come out ! ”

The creature raved and gibbered, anxious to attack us. Yet it seemed half terrified, and stood mowing, or now advancing and now starting back.

“ See,” cried Lebbæus, excitedly, “ see ; he is already frightened. The evil spirit has heard me, and is frightened. Evil spirit, I conjure thee to come out.”

“ Thou hast not asked his name, Lebbæus,” I said. “ Or perchance they are Legion.” And then, remembering Baal’s prophets, “ Mind,

Lebbæus, the man is rushing to attack you. Let me conjure them."

Lebbæus took to his heels. But my conjuration was of no more effect ; I flung a stone, which sent the creature raving back to his tomb, and we passed on our way.

"Strange," said Lebbæus. "I have seen but one cast out ; I cannot recall the words our Master used. . . . I must ask him. He would say we had no faith. If one has faith even as a grain of mustard seed, you know, dear Judas, one can remove mountains."

"And, dear Lebbæus," said I — why was it that these men made such visible display of affection, when in Pilate's palace there were more curses among the household than endearments ?—" pray, what is this faith ? "

"We should have believed more strongly that the evil spirits would obey us."

"Then didst thou not believe ? " I asked.

"I was not quite sure. Wert thou ? "

The rocky path rose with an abrupt steepness ; we came to a summit which looked over a great expanse of open plain. It was a bare and desolate country. Far below were fir-trees like toys such as children play with during the Feasts ; and a torrential river rushing over its bed of shale. On a slab of rock lay the

carcass of a buffalo, hideously swollen ; vultures gorged upon it, or waited for their turn. So far beneath was the ravine—so high had we mounted—that below was a floating wreath of filmy cloud, and an eagle circled beneath our feet. I stood near the edge of the precipice, looking down. The dizzy height fascinated me ; it seemed that in my power lay all beneath : trees, birds of prey, mountain torrent, the hut of some goat-herd with its stacked faggots, the tiny black figure of the man, his browsing goats. Omnipotent I seemed ; could not my hand span the torrent, my finger and thumb catch up the man and toss him as prey, if it pleased me, to the eagle ? Lebbæus clutched me suddenly. “ Judas, Judas, thou wert nearly flinging yourself down ! ” I came to my senses with a start. Indeed, the depth had fascinated me ; I had been on the point of casting myself over headlong.

“ Now our Master had just that temptation in the desert, Judas,” said Lebbæus. He breathed fast with his horror at the narrowness of my escape. “ Just that temptation. The devil came to him and said, ‘ Cast thyself down, and God will give His angels charge of thee so that thou shalt not be dashed against the stones.’ But he said, ‘ It is written, Thou

shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' From a like high place also he showed him all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory, and promised to give them if Jesus would worship him."

"Then had I the same temptation as the Master, Lebbæus," said I. "I did not cast myself down; I did not take my kingdom, though it was but a stream, a goat-herd's hut, carrion and birds of prey, and one peasant to be subject. Therefore I am as great as the Master. God, letting me be tempted thus, means great things for me." For indeed I realised that this fascination, this swelling pride to have complete dominion even over so little, was a temptation of the devil. . . .

"Not so," said Lebbæus, "thou wouldst have let thyself go but for me." And we argued the matter hotly.

"Go to," I said, "thou art but a foolish man, Lebbæus; a clod of this soil. Such a high temptation came not to such as thou, but to me. Why, thou wentest not even near the edge; but kept discreetly and timidly back. . . . Even now dost thou pant with the fright of it; thy fingers clutch the brambles."

"I am not such a fool as to go near the edge when I might fall over."

“No—thou art no such fool ; but the fool and the great man are close of kin. My thoughts are greater than thy thoughts.”

“God Himself said that,” said Lebbæus. “There is a story I have read of two cats. One was chained to a tree on a beach, and it went round and about the tree ; when it went one way, it sang hymns and songs, when it went the other it told stories. And it looked at the sky and the tree and the sea ; but it went not beyond the chain, and was happy. But the other cat wandered all by itself, on the cliff ; and sang very noisily by itself ; and it went to the edge one dark night to taunt the other cat—‘ See how high I am ! Thou canst not wander as I wander. Thou art chained to thy tree. Thou must go round and round in a beaten path.’ And while it was speaking, it fell over in the darkness. So I prefer to be safe, and I tell my stories, as just now, in security, and I sing my hymns—La, La, La.”

“Yes, thou tellest thy tales and singest thy hymns ; peace, Lebbæus ; let one cat make his noise at a time—and thou singest, as thou sayest ; and in my heart I think, ‘ Give me freedom on the edge, even with the risk ; and my higher thoughts and my higher temptations.’ ”

He continued his song in a flat, dismal note,

infinitely distressing ; until I put my fingers on each tragus of my ears, and implored him to be silent. So we passed on our way into Zelzar.

We had been told to enquire on coming to a city who within was worthy. But of whom in Zelzar should we enquire ? At the first dwelling, the man turned us roughly away. But a widow received us, having heard our Master's fame ; she knew the mother of one who had been healed. She was an old woman, and garrulous ; we could not even eat in peace, for her longing to know all that we had heard him say and seen him do. Was he then so great a teacher ? She said a long grace before little food ; and at even we sang a hymn.

We stayed in Zelzar three days. Lebbæus kept me in constant irritation. His thin, foxy face, his voice ranging from whine to squeal or grunt, his pitiful attempts to imitate the Master, his tireless activity, kept me in a state of tension. I hated the sound and sight of him. If Thomas had been with me—or even John ! Peter I did not like ; we quarrelled often. He took—arrogantly, I thought—the place next to Jesus himself, and tried to rule us. But John I grew to admire, and almost love. Physically he attracted me as none other of the disciples did ; the beauty of Jesus lay in the

marvellous expressiveness of his eyes, which could show anger, compassion, bitter scorn, the tenderest love. But John was a divine youth in face and bearing ; eager, alert, a young god who might have dwelt in those cloud-capped Grecian mountains or groves of which I had heard poets speak at Pilate's court. The Greeks had a great poet named Homer ; some of his verses I much admired. And this qualified me for mastership, also, I thought ; that I knew of such things as even Jesus had no knowledge of. He had heard no great orators, seen no great actors, listened to no great poetry ; except the poets of Israel. But I knew these also. Sometimes I would quote them ; in the ship, perhaps, on a smooth blue sea—

*“ A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port,
Freighted with toys of every sort—
With gold and amber chains. . . .
Each female eye the glittering links employ ;
They turn, review, and cheapen every toy.”*

“ Heathen ! ” cried Peter. “ Singing your lewd verse, when there are our precious psalms ” ; for he was jealous of my knowledge ; good enough for him, the rough talk of his countryside.

But Jesus said, “ Those also are beautiful. But beware of thy Greek knowledge, Judas ;

the Greeks are a people given to disputation, ever learning yet missing often the way."

"Have they also knowledge given them of the way, Master?"

"To every man born into the world the light is given. But there are those that love better the darkness."

"See now," John said to me once—for his eyes had lit up when I said my verse, and others I had heard about women waiting for their men-folk to come back from the wars, and waiting vainly—"see now" (we were walking on the quay at Cæsarea) "how that bright-hued parrot in the cage yonder chatters—and behold that ape, blue-patched. I have seen also a beast which carries its young in a pouch; and the camels yonder have seven stomachs in which to hold water for their journeys. Jesus tells us of a world beyond and behind this world we see with our eyes; and indeed in the Scriptures we read sometimes of it; the eyes of the young man at Dothan, being opened, saw chariots and horsemen. Where, too, do those bright spirits dwell, of which we read sometimes as coming to this world?"

"That is indeed true," I said. "All know it. There is nothing new in what the Master says."

"No—but these people do not believe. It

is not real to them. And Jesus tries to make it real. He has opened a new door. He has told me—shown me—such things as I never dreamed ; and so I love him. Oh, it is a glorious land to which he bids us come ; his Father's kingdom of many mansions. There are streets of gold ; and a sea more beautiful by far than this ; a sea of dazzling crystal, where there are no storms——”

“ Are there fish in that sea, John ? ” I asked.
“ And how sail the ships thereon ? ”

“ There are rivers also of living water,” he said, his eyes glowing, “ and green pastures. The gates are of pearl, sardonyx, chrysolite, beryl, turquoise, and chalcedony—all manner of precious stones, jasper, likewise, and agate, cornelian, emerald, and sapphire——”

“ ’Tis a great goldsmith's shop,” I said.

“ Ah, but there are no thieves to steal its treasures, and all enjoy freely. Little children play in the streets, which are of gold ; and there are thrones on which we shall sit to judge the nations—you, and Peter, and James, and I, and all the others.”

A throne to judge the nations ! Ah, how should I love to see them bow and cringe and humble themselves before me ; and to send great kings to their doom.

"How knowest thou all this?" I asked.

"How know I? Have I not seen in vision with mine own eyes? How know I? Judas, it is glorious beyond telling. There is no death there, no night, no sickness. All is happiness and love."

"And thinkest thou he is the Messiah that should come? Peter believes he is. Thinkest thou in very truth he will raise a kingdom in Israel?"

"I am sure; sure as I am that behind all we see there are these things. If those birds speak, if there are all those strange beasts in the world, why not in that other?"

"I know not. . . . Yet we cannot tell with any certainty until we see with our own eyes. 'See and handle,' Thomas says; he is the wisest of you all."

"Thomas is wise; yet I think that I am also wise," said John. "We may know—we can know! 'And the half hath not been told us.' . . . Proof to me even, that such strange things and beautiful as we see here on earth exist. But often in vision, at night in the darkness upon my bed, in the ship at sea when we move drowsily under the sun and scarce a ripple marks our course, scarce even stirs the sail; walking alone on the cliff or shore, or in

the silent mountain places, I see and hear—the veil is drawn aside—oh, things so wonderful I see and hear, Judas.”

“I see nought of this,” I said. “They are but dreams, John. I, too, dream dreams; very marvellous. But last night I was a great sultan, and slaves bowed before me and kings brought me gifts. And Herod came to hold the stirrup of my horse. . . . But I woke, and I was no sultan, and round me were but the disciples; and Herod lay sleeping in his palace at Sepphoris. Thy dreams are no more real than that.”

“They are real—they are real!” he cried. “I see; I hear; I feel; I know. The veil draws aside. What is beyond is real; not only in dreams of the night, but in waking vision I see.”

“Thou art wrong, John. Thy dreams——”

“My vision! The men of old saw such things. Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel——”

“Yes—but Scripture says that at a time vision failed in Israel.”

“Then it comes again—it comes again. And I say again, the half has not been told us. Look at that man selling his fish on the quay, and the crowd surrounding him; at those peasants, and the two Greeks talking so earnestly; that Pharisee praying by the wall yonder; the

Roman centurion stepping from his galley. They do not know, or they know only with their heads. But Jesus cries to them, ' I am showing you—look ! look ! This is what I have to tell you. Listen to me, and I will give you rest ; I will bring peace and joy to your hearts, weary with work and suffering and perplexity ; listen, listen, I will lead you to this beautiful land.' But they will not listen. Oh, they will not listen. Why do they not believe ? ”

“ If he is king on earth,” I said, “ then we shall be very great.”

“ He will be king. He shall and must reign. And, O Judas, if he reign, what matter our greatness ? I want but to sit on the footstep of his throne, and to watch and listen—and love.”

“ It matters to me not a little,” I said. “ I was in Pilate's house, and great things lay before me. There were women who loved me, I had my own vineyard at Kerioth. But these others—what have they given up ? Or you ? ”

“ Yet have I given up something,” said John. “ My father has his own boats, his own hired servants ; he is a friend of the high priest ; he is no mean man. I worked for him in the market at Jerusalem, selling the fish as it came from the lake ; yes, I have given up something.”

“ Ah, but I . . .” I said, and fell silent. For we went up to the hill, to the shore, to the sea ; and Jesus taught and healed ; and the days passed—but the kingdom was no nearer. “ Already,” I said, “ the scribes and Pharisees are against him. How can he stand against them ? No, John, our Master is but a man, and the carpenter of Nazareth after all ; a good man, a great teacher and healer, neither king nor God.”

This was before he had stilled the tempest. . . .

Had John been with me, how pleasant our sojourn in Zelzar ! How different our discourse in the quiet evening hours, watching the maidens at the well—when now Lebbæus chattered like a gibbering ape ! I wished Jesus had sent some other with me as his *Sheluchim*.

We said *Shalom lakem* to our good hostess ; then, “ Lebbæus,” said I, “ our roads now lie asunder. You go yonder way ; I this. Thus shall we carry out the better our mission.” He was a fellow of mulish mind, and I had some ado to free myself of his company. But at last we parted.

I came at even to a small village, five leagues distant. Now we had been sent out without scrip, without purse, without change of raiment ; we wore but the common sandals of palm-bark

on our feet. The widow with whom we lodged at Zelzar was very poor. I thought, "Now will I find some rich man's house for my lodging," and asked who were rulers of the synagogue. They sent me to one Simon ben Jochai, a goldsmith.

"Peace be to this house," I said. "I am Judas Iscariot of Kerioth, sent by Jesus of Nazareth to preach the tidings of the kingdom of God."

"You may be Jesus of Nazareth himself for aught I care," said the maid who opened to me. "My master is sick; he can see no one. He fell ill to-day, visiting his vineyard in the hills under the burning sun, and his men brought him hither. Who is this Jesus? We are all Pharisees in this house."

I praised God for the good chance He had given me. I had wanted to try my newly-given powers; and here was a rich man who called for healing. I said, "Jesus is a great teacher and healer, the greatest in all Syria. You are away from the world here; in his own country crowds follow him daily. But I am also a healer; I have done many mighty works. Let me see your master."

"If you can heal him," she said, and went

within. In a minute she returned. "My master will see you, sir."

I entered a shady room. On his bed, under a striped quilted covering of rich silk, lay a man of middle age, his body short but mountainous beneath the counterpane. A hand lay exposed, and on the fingers were many costly rings. His beard was long and silky, of black mingled with grey; his brows were bushy, his nose—very large—showed several hairs. "I have but to cure this Esau," I thought, "and my comfort and well-being are secured. Of a surety he will repay me with more than entertainment." For I saw that he was very sick.

The thought of Gehazi flashed across my mind; he was stricken with leprosy for his sin. Ah—but Jesus, could he know in far Capernaum or in the Galilean hills; he had healed the leper; he would strike no one with that foulness. "It is needful," I said to myself, "that I should believe he will be cured. I do believe. . . . Master," I said, taking the ringed hand, "I am come to cure thy sickness."

The man turned his head listlessly on the pillow; he glanced at me through glazed and half-closed eyes. But he did not speak.

"Arise and walk," I said.

He lay motionless.

"I say unto thee, Arise ! Thy sickness hath departed."

Now this was a strange thing. When Jesus spake, men flung down their crutches, found words who had been dumb, saw and praised God. From the lepers the scales fell ; those possessed ceased to blaspheme. But this man moved not.

I lifted my eyes to heaven. "Our Father in heaven," I said—it was thus we had been wont to pray—"through Thy servant, Jesus, Thou hast promised me this power to heal. Let the man arise and walk."

I looked ; still there was no movement, no word, no sign of healing. His eyes closed as if in weariness. And, at that moment, while I watched, wondering what next to do—my fingers at my lips—several people entered.

"Stand aside, there, stand aside," said a small, pursy man, comfortably dressed. "I am a physician. Who art thou, good man ?"

"I am Judas Iscariot of Kerioth," I said, "a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth."

"Ah, I have heard of him," said the physician dryly. He turned glittering, bead-like eyes upon me. They fell on my poor and worn raiment, my dust-covered sandals ; his glance seemed to read my soul. "I have heard of

that fellow. A wine-bibber ; a friend of publicans and sinners ; a consort of evil women ; a caster-out of devils by the Prince of devils. . . . So thou art his disciple, come to cure my friend, eh ? I have long wished to see these mighty works. Come ; call upon him to take up his bed and walk."

And he turned very knowingly to those about him. " Watch, now, thou shalt see a miracle."

" For that matter," I said hotly—for I knew now that the power of healing had passed from me, or had not been given,—“ his illness has gone beyond your skill or mine. I, too, know you village physicians and your quackeries. Has one a cold ? Let him kiss a mule's nose. A fever ? He shall eat the flesh of mice. Is he a leper ? Ah, there you are helpless. But Jesus and I have made their flesh as the flesh of little children."

" I have heard that he has soiled his hands with such offal. You are an impudent fellow, sirrah ; get you begone." And, the others being round me, very threatening, and demanding that the village officers should be called, I cursed the house and left it.

I was now in something of a quandary ; it was late, and I an-hungered ; soon I found that the news of my discomfiture had spread from

mouth to mouth. Men and women eyed me laughing, and wagged their heads at me. "Now how was it," I thought, "that my power failed? Jesus was mistaken, or lied; or perchance I lost the word that should have healed him." So here were good housing and food and payment gone; and a name to be scoffed at throughout those parts. Men and boys followed for some distance from the village, flinging stones and laughing. I shook the dust from my feet as a testimony against them, and set forth on another weary journey. How I longed now for friendship, even for Lebbæus! How I wished that I were once more with the others in the ship; or at Peter's house, eating the evening meal. Meagre fare enough—fish, or lentils, or some pottage—it would have been to me more than a royal banquet. Peter had told me once of the temptation in the wilderness. Jesus was hungry too; and the devil tempted him to turn the stones into bread.

"And at Cana," I thought, "he turned the water into wine." I said to the stones on the pathway, "Be bread." But they changed not. I said to the tiny stream running by the path from the hills, "Be wine." But it changed not.

At last I entered a village. Here lived poor folk who believed; they gave me a mean lodging.

But how delicious now the food ! How soft the bed ! I sang their evening hymn with a glad heart ; I praised God for His goodness. I could not heal the sick ? Then I could not heal them. . . . But I felt resentment still against Jesus. Perhaps there was some secret which he had not told me.

There was a little boy in the house, eight years old. He was beautiful as Absalom in childhood ; his eyes soft and bright, his hair silky and curled, his limbs delicately shaped. In the morning I played with him in a meadow near the house, making chains of bright flowers. He danced and shouted with delight.

I was loth to leave these simple folk, and to take the hot and weary road again. . . . But I had not gone a league when a voice hailed me, and, turning, I saw the mother of the boy.

“ Master ! Master ! ” she cried.

I thought that, like Gehazi, she ran after me for payment, but the “ Master ” made me turn. She called to me, as if to Jesus himself. “ Master ! Come and save my child, my little son ! ”

And when I came to her, “ Herod has a villa in these hills,” she said. “ Scarce had you departed, giving your blessing on our house, when his chariot came at speed through the

village. And my child—my boy—was in the road. Oh, master, come and say but the word, and heal him.”

“Woman,” I began sadly, for I remembered how time after time I had called vainly upon the ruler to rise from his bed of sickness. Yet if I could heal the child! Should I say that I was no magician? Perhaps her faith would save me.

“I will come,” I said.

I entered the house again. He was nigh unto death. The eyes were closed and fringed with their long lashes; the cheeks that had been so ruddy, livid; the marred limbs motionless. So full of life just now! And I thought, “Better if I myself had been struck down thus, than this lovely child, so full of budding life, meaning to her so much.”

She stood with anguish in her eyes, her hand at her breast.

“Oh, master, master, save him—my only boy! And he so beautiful, so clever. Already did he study the Mishna, and but eight years old! There is no boy in the village who knows aught beyond the Mikra at eight. Oh, master, master, save him, as Israel’s prophet saved that little boy stricken among the corn.”

The story came back to me. “Father,” I

said secretly to God, "Thou seest the distress of this poor woman. Give me power now to heal the child."

The memory of that story which was her plea came to me ; I stretched myself upon the body of the boy. She looked on, wondering. A maid was in the room, who whispered, " Indeed he is a true prophet, for thus was the Shunammite's son raised by Elisha ! " As the body of Abishag, the fair damsel also of Shunam, lay upon King David in his age, so lay mine, hot with the morning sun, upon the boy ; my mouth also upon his mouth, and my hands upon his hands.

" Of a truth," said the mother, " do I know indeed that he is a man of God " ; as the woman said also to Elijah, when he stretched himself three times, and the boy's soul returned, " Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."

And gradually the boy's body waxed warm, and he opened his eyes in wonder, blinking in the sunshine. " Mother—mother ! " he cried, as if frightened ; and she took him in her arms, and praised God.

It was strange ; I thought that this miracle would be followed by immense elation of pride.

And I felt very humble ; proud only that God had let me do this service to the poor woman. She pressed money and food and wine upon me ; I took nothing, but blessed them and their house, and went away.

It was still early morn ; clouds of sparrows fluttered above the village houses, roller birds showed their vivid blue among the trees. In my heart also birds seemed to sing ; a great peace filled me, and such strange happiness as I had not known to be in life.

VII

JESUS went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Purim, which celebrates the day when Haman cast the lot to destroy the Jews, and thus brought about their deliverance. After the fast, the 14th and 15th of Adar are given over to universal rejoicing and works of good will. We entered the Temple—I having then returned from my mission,—and Jesus listened with the rest to the reading of the Book of Esther, when all present, at each mention of the name of Haman, clap, and stamp, and cry “ Let his memory perish ! ”

We went afterwards to the Sheep Gate, and passed under the porticoes of the Pool of Bethesda. Here Jesus made his Purim offering. Among those who waited for the troubling of the water was one who had been paralyzed for nigh forty years. Unaided, he had not been able to force his way among others into the healing stream. Now, seeing him thus impotent, Jesus said, “ Take up thy couch, and walk.”

The man arose, lifted his pallet, and began to walk.

But the wonder caused by this miracle was lost in the indignation caused by the breaking of the Sabbath day. Jesus had said that he came not to destroy the law ; yet more than once he broke the Sabbath day, and encouraged others to do likewise. Once I saw a man working on the Sabbath ; we passed the wall of the garden in which he worked, and I waited to hear some reproof. But Jesus said, " O man, blessed art thou if thou knowest what thou art doing, but cursed if thou knowest not." This was a strange saying ; it was not often difficult to understand what he said. And again I heard him say, when Peter hewed down a tree to make a fire on the beach of Gennesaret, " Raise the stone, and you will find me ; cleave the wood, and I am there." Now this was also a strange saying. . . . And once on the Sabbath day we walked in the corn-field, and, being hungry, ate of the corn. Instead of reproving us, Jesus defended us from those who came to attack us. I thought little better of him for professing to uphold the law of Moses, yet breaking it thus himself.

Now the onlookers crowded about us ; " It is the Sabbath," they said ; " it is not lawful for

thee to carry thy bed to-day. Who has told thee to carry it ? ”

“ He that made me whole ; I know not who he was.”

For Jesus had departed.

But later the Master, meeting the man whom he had healed in the Temple, charged him to tell no man who had healed him. I think that he feared the rulers of the people ; he, before whom the wind and the sea had been abashed. And this was a strange thing. The fellow went straightway to these rulers, and told them that Jesus of Nazareth had made him whole, and had commanded him to take up his bed.

Our Master was summoned before a committee of the Sanhedrin to answer this charge. He told them that he had authority as the Son of God, who had committed all judgment and all honour to him. . . . I had a friend in the Temple—the Levite Abiathah ; he told that it was a wondrous discourse, such as no man had ever heard ; “ Truly,” said he, “ your Jesus is a fine actor.” He seems to have spoken then quite otherwise than to the simple folk on the hillsides ; with authority, as a king’s son speaking to mean men. And these our rulers ! He spake to them of resurrection and of judgment. “ Ye sent unto John,” he said, “ and he

bare witness unto the truth. He was a burning and a shining light ; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John. I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. How can ye believe, which have honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only ? I accuse you not to the Father ; one accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust."

He left the Sanhedrin, and came privily again into Galilee. The scribes and Pharisees sought now to slay him ; and news was brought that struck another blow at a cause which—so full of promise once—now seemed to me in danger of loss. Powerful over nature, able to cure disease or conquer death, I saw now wherein lay the weakness of my Master. In his own defence he might not use his powers, or knew not how to use them. He could bless ; he could not harm or curse ; if he cursed, his curse fell harmless. When he cried " Woe ! " to the Pharisees and his enemies, they went scornfully on their way. No fire from heaven consumed them ; the ground opened not to swallow them. And this, indeed, made me doubt whether he were of a truth the Son of God. Because God sent pestilence and war in His anger ; He smote Pharaoh with many

plagues. Had Jesus been His son, he could have smitten his enemies also. But the leprosy, passing from a man, fell not on to another, as when Gehazi was covered with the leprosy of Naaman ; the blindness or deafness of a man fell not upon another.

Herein lay his weakness. . . . This thought came to me as we walked upon the shore together on the night after his return. The month of Adar had been cold and stormy ; the wrack of storm lay on the desolate beach, and over the skies passed clouds full of omen. I had just told him of the child whom I had healed ; his face, sadder than its wont, lit up ; "Thou didst well, Judas," he said ; " 'twas love in thee that answered the love of God, and so healed him."

"Master," I said, "goest thou again to Jerusalem for the Passover ?"

"We keep our Passover with our own people on the hills," he said.

It was later on that day that news came of the murder of John the Baptist.

Herod Antipas, who ruled in Sepphoris as Tetrarch of Galilee, had, while visiting the Emperor at Rome, stayed at the house of his brother, Herod Philip, and had carried away his wife Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus, and at once sister-in-law and niece of Antipas.

She became the evil genius of his house. Abiathah had an uncle who was warder in the frontier fortress of Machærus. It was a grim and battered pile built on the living rock. Now, this man told Abiathah that one night he was on the battlements when a great shout was heard, and he saw horses travelling fast through the darkness. A torch was carried by one rider ; the sparks streamed out into the night. And, when the challenge was answered, it was Herod's disdained and discarded wife, who, not waiting for her divorce, had ridden in haste and rage hither. She went later to her own father, the Arabian Emir Arxetas, at Petra. Arabia declared war, and Herod's throne was saved only by the help of Rome.

Sensual, cowardly, superstitious, he was of those who are always learning without good will to profit by knowledge of the truth. He had at his court teachers and prophets, wise men and philosophers ; he sought their counsel, trembled under their warnings, yet took the path he had marked out, heedless of advice or threat. Of such teachers was John. From the Black Fortress into which Herod had cast him he came often, with chains over his rough camel's hair raiment, by the Tetrarch's order. In some things, easy to perform, Herod obeyed his

voice ; he refused to dismiss the woman whose life was now linked with his.

Herodias hated the prophet with a bitter and savage hatred.

On his birthday Herod prepared a great banquet for his courtiers and nobles at his palace of Julias, not far from Machærus. And Salome, the daughter of Herodias—a granddaughter of the great Herod, a descendant of Herod the High Priest, a princess of the Mac-cabean line,—danced before him.

Flushed and heated with wine, intoxicated with the glitter, the revelry, the music of the feast, the sensual motions of the girl who danced before him (as I myself have seen slaves dance in Pilate's house, and the little slave-girl whom I bought for my first master), Herod swore to give Salome aught she might desire ; even to the half of his kingdom. And Herodias said, " Ask for the head of John, my enemy, in a charger."

John was beheaded in his prison ; the headless trunk was flung over the battlements to the dogs. And, on a golden charger, his head—over which, as over that of Jesus (if what they said was true), the light had shone and a voice had thundered above Jordan—was brought before Herod and his mistress.

Manaen the Essene and another of John's disciples brought the news. Jesus, hearing it, went out alone into the darkness. We sat together, and whispered. Some had known John well ; a great, strong, hairy man, living in the desert places on his locusts and water and wild honey ; none to call *him* wine-bibber. Hair streaming to the winds—leather girdle, cloak of camel's hair ; one saw him crying to deaf ears and stubborn hearts his message of repentance and of the coming kingdom. Some said even that he was Elias come again.

And so the forerunner, the prophet of the coming king, was dead ; what of our king and kingdom ?

Jesus entered while we still sat together in the half-darkness, whispering. Because, indeed, the hopes of so short a time before seemed darkened. They had slain John ; our Master's life was itself in peril. . . . His face was set and very sad ; we knew he had been praying under the purple vault of heaven, beside the evening stillness of the lake, perhaps weeping, even—for it seemed to me that his eyes were wet with tears. John and he had played together, once. But our Master spake no word.

The next day he took ship, we with him, and came to a desert place near Bethesda.

And all day crowds followed him, he healing their diseases. But at even, as they still followed, we said to him, " Master, send away the multitude ; night falls, and they have followed thee all day without food ; let them go into the villages to buy bread."

" Give them to eat," he said.

" We have no bread," said Philip, " and two hundred pennyworth would not suffice so many."

" How many loaves have you ? " asked Jesus. Andrew said, " A lad here has five small barley loaves and two fishes." He told the multitude to sit down on the green grass, and blessed, and brake the bread. And how I know not ; but all were filled, and we took up afterwards twelve basketsful of the fragments. . . .

Yet Peter had told me that, in the wilderness, he had been unable or not willing to turn the stones to bread for his own use.

- We crossed the lake now to the other side ; Jesus remaining alone among the mountains. But when we were in the midst of the sea a great storm suddenly arose. We tossed hither and thither at the mercy of the waves, none helping us ; for now there was no sleeper to call upon for aid. . . . And some were sore afraid. In the fourth watch of the night, when

we were thirty furlongs from the shore, a form, white and ghostly in the darkness, moved towards us over the troubled surface of the sea. We watched, breathless. "It is a spirit!" cried Peter; and a great fear fell upon us. Dark, under tenebrous clouds, rose the far mountains of the coast, from whose rock-sepulchres perchance had come the dead to visit us. And the Master was not here.

Then across the sea, as we battled desperately against the tempest, came the voice we knew, and had heard so often, and now longed for. "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

Peter sprang up. "Lord," he cried, "if it be thou indeed, bid me come to thee upon the water." He dashed the brine from his eyes with his great rough hands, and peered through the filmy darkness.

"Come," said Jesus.

Peter cast himself upon the surface of the sea; it seemed to bear him. But at the raging wind and towering waves, he lost heart suddenly, and, staggering at first across the troubled water, his feet began slowly to sink; lower and lower as he struggled, until only his head was above the waves. "Lord! Lord!" he shrieked, "save me, or I perish!" Jesus

stretched out his hand and caught him ; and they came together to the ship.

And we fell on our knees on the wet deck before Jesus, crying, " Of a truth, thou art the Son of God ! " We, I say ; but I did not kneel, though I bowed my head and joined in the spoken homage. For some moments his eyes rested on my face, seeming to read my inner thought. I could not understand this miracle. If he walked safely—as he seemed to do ; how else could he have reached the ship ?—I wondered that Peter should have failed. He had had faith, or he would scarce have cast himself into the sea. It appeared that he had really power over nature. The tempest had been stilled by his voice ; yet how if by curious chance at that moment peace had fallen, and would have fallen, without his word ? At much that he did and said I marvelled. Always there seemed some second meaning to his words ; and, nearly always, some other explanation possible of his mighty works.

Thomas and I spake much together of these matters. " He seemed indeed to walk upon the waves," said Thomas ; " but, mark you, Judas, the night was misty and dark ; some cried that he was a spirit ; may he not have come in some small coracle from the

shore, and when we saw him, thrust it under him ? ”

“ Thou makest him an impostor,” said I.

“ I cannot understand,” said Thomas, reflectively. “ How can a man walk on water ? When I see or hear such a thing, I say at once, ‘ This seems impossible ; how otherwise might it have happened ? ’ ”

“ But that he rowed out in a coracle, which sank under him thus when we saw him—that is incredible.”

“ Of two things impossible, which seems most likely to have happened ? ” asked Thomas. “ The stilling of the tempest was simple enough. He knows these lakes better even than Peter ; he knows the weather signs, and has spoken of them in his parables. He saw peace was coming, and, when he saw it, rebuked the wind and sea.”

The multitude which he had fed the previous night had looked in vain by the lakeside for the boats ; they passed over in search of Jesus to Capernaum. Far and wide, the story of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand had spread abroad. For here indeed was a teacher worthy to be followed, if he could with five small loaves and two fishes feed so many. Jesus accused them of following him for what he gave them, and said that he was the bread

of life, sent down from heaven as manna was sent down, when Moses led them out of Egypt. Some of the Jews murmured at this, saying, "Is not this the son of Joseph and Mary? How can he have come down from heaven?" He went into the synagogue at Capernaum and taught there of the bread of life. Even we murmured at what he said. "This is a hard saying, Master; who can understand it?" one asked.

"Does this offend you? What if you shall see the Son of Man ascend into heaven? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. But there are some of you that believe not."

He looked round the synagogue; many faces were confused at his glance. . . . And his eyes rested on me.

The Pharisees were angered at this teaching; we came to tell him. "Let them alone," he said; "they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." But because of the opposition of the rulers, he left Capernaum, and went to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Here, thought I, are rich lands for our kingdom; quays laden with merchandise, argosies sailing to the Isles of the Gentiles, and Greece, and Italy, and

Spain ; towers and minarets and tombs ; palms and citron groves at the edge of sapphire waters. Here were rich cities, and cities of famous if evil history. I loved to wander among the quays, and watch the ships, and talk to the shipmen. One day the vessel that had brought me from Emesa was in the port, lading with cedar and other woods. My old ship-master was there, a Sidonian, swarthy, with curled black hair, and rings in his pierced ears. He hailed me lustily. My old master, he said, was dead ; he had risen in revolt against the King of Emesa, and had been strangled. Of the little slave-girl he knew nothing. . . . And what, he asked, had I found to do in Syria ?

I told him that I had been page to Pilate, and had since followed one Jesus of Nazareth, a great teacher, and prophet of the Most High God.

“ Ah, your God of Israel ; I know him of olden time ; one who cares not for the folk of our parts.” He laughed a great laugh, and swore then a great oath. “ Nor we for him,” he said ; “ we have gods of our own. And sometimes we make our gods, so that we can shape them to our liking, and chastise them, and see them—which is better than a God in the clouds. I think I have heard of this Jesus.

At Joppa was a sailor-man who believed in him ; he came with me for a voyage, and a worse seaman never did I clap eyes on, always on his marrow-bones at prayer or hymn."

I told him of the stilling of the tempest, and the walking on the sea, thinking he might know whether such things could be. But he laughed again, and said, "Often have I heard sailors tell such tales."

Now Lebbæus was with me, and they had just given me the bag. All money we received was held in common. "Judas," he said, "give me money, and I will buy that green parrot from the Emesa forest, and that little ape with the blue patch where its tail should be. Do you not think God makes that silly bird talk, and paints the behind of the ape, which is His mock of man, for our instruction ?"

"I do not know," I said. "But I can spare no money from the bag. Are we to have a parrot and an ape among our disciples ?"

"I will give you interest on the money," said Lebbæus. "Let me but have the money, Judas."

He bought the bird and the ape, and I fancied soon would be teaching the parrot his parables. And it became a jest among the disciples to see Lebbæus with his pets, talking to and

caressing them. Often now I was able to lend Lebbæus money from the common fund ; he worked as a basket-maker, and made good profits.

Jesus entered a house and desired to be left alone ; but a Syro-Phœnician woman came to him and fell at his feet, asking him to have pity on her daughter, who was possessed by a devil. But he answered her not. . . . And when she still cried, in Greek and broken Aramaic, " Lord, Lord, help me ! " he said, " It is not meet to give the children's bread unto dogs." " No, Lord," she said ; " but even the dogs eat from the crumbs that fall from the children's table. " Great is thy faith, O woman," he said ; " thy daughter is made whole."

We returned to Galilee by the coasts of Decapolis, among people who knew not the God of Israel, but worshipped graven images. Here he healed a man who was deaf and dumb, and again fed the multitudes on a few small loaves and fishes. Sending away the people, he took ship now for Magdala, and came at last to the coasts of Cesarea Philippi. Here were wonderful oak glades, and mountains in which were great caves. And one day when we were all together, Jesus asked us a question

which had been in many minds, and had had already many answers : “ Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am ? ” We answered, “ Some say that thou art John the Baptist, escaped from the Black Fortress ; and some, Elias ; and some, one of the prophets.” “ But whom say ye that I am ? ” Peter said, “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Jesus said also, speaking of us as his disciples, “ Have I not chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil ? ” It seemed to me again that his glance fell upon me.

He turned to Peter. “ Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee. Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I give unto thee the keys of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth the same shall be loosed in heaven.” And then, for the first time, he spake of his death ; that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the scribes and Pharisees, and be killed, and rise again the third day. And then would he come again in the glory of his Father with his angels, and reward every man according to his works.

But within ourselves we marvelled, and Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be unto thee. . . ." This, then, was his kingdom ; no earthly reign, no breaking of Rome's dominion ; but suffering and shame and death ; and afterwards the glory of the angels. This, then, was the Master I had followed ; a teacher, yet a teacher in simple words, and no great orator like those I had heard in Pilate's palace ; a healer, yet one able only to heal and to help others, powerless to save himself from suffering and death. For himself, he could not turn the stones to bread. For himself, and for his own cause, he could not save John from an adulterous woman's malice. He could still the tempest ; but could not save himself from the Pharisees and scribes, his enemies. This the Christ, the Son of the Living God ?

They called him sinless. He had defiled himself with the leper he had healed ; he had broken the Sabbath of his people ; he had mingled with the publican and sinner ; he had consorted with evil women. He was a wine-bibber and a lover of good things. He feared the rulers of the synagogue. His mighty works he could not do among his own people, who knew him for the carpenter's son.

Jesus of Nazareth—son of Joseph, the car-

penter, son of Mary. The Christ, the Son of the Living God, sent down from heaven ?

Sorry and pitiful illusion ! He had chosen twelve, and one of us a devil. And the others looked from face to face : “ Who is it ? Of whom does the Master speak ? Is it I ? Is it you ? ”

I thought, “ I will still follow him ; but in his service is no honour, no wealth, no glory. And in my heart I am his enemy.”

VIII

NEAR Cesarea Philippi is a high mountain called the Panium, the lower slopes of which are covered with oak-trees, but the upper with short grass. Here one night Jesus took Peter and James and John to pray. James told me—bidding me let none know until Christ was risen from the dead—that they had slept on the grass, and, waking, had seen with their startled eyes a sudden blaze of glory, Jesus transfigured, his face shining, his robes dazzling white, as snow upon the mountain summits. They fell on their faces, but Peter cried—seeing that Moses and Elias stood also with the Master,—“ Lord, let us build tents, and dwell here together on this Holy Mountain.” Suddenly a cloud covered them all, darker than the surrounding night ; and a Voice spake, “ This is my beloved Son, hear Him.” . . . And the dawn rose, and they came down the mountain-side together.

“ James,” I said, “ thou wert heavy with sleep,

and 'twas but the brightness of the moon shining upon him that was thy vision."

"Would I had been there!" said Thomas. "I should have asked Moses to let me take him by the hand, and then I would have believed."

"Fools!" cried James, very angry, for he was quickly roused to anger. "Did I not see with mine eyes? Did I not hear with mine ears the voice of God?"

"It seemed to you that you heard. But thunder may have come from the cloud. Had I heard the words, I might believe."

"And I," I said.

James clenched the fist; I thought he would strike me in the face. But he turned on his heel, growling to himself. And he said afterwards to Jesus, "Lord, these disciples of thine—so they name themselves, but their hearts are not with thee—say that thou wert not transfigured on the Holy Mountain."

"I said that thou should'st tell no man, until I was risen from the dead." And he turned to Peter, asking whether he had believed.

"I believe my own eyes and ears," said Peter.

It was Peter upon whom he had promised to build his church; for the name Peter means a stone; but the name Judas means praised. I thought that better to me might he have made

this great promise. Peter was a rough and ignorant fisherman, a Galilean ; but I a Jew, I had often read the Law in the synagogue at Kerioth, my father was a great man in its affairs and friendly with the rulers, I had lived in great houses.

Upon whom, then, better might his church be founded ? And I saw in vision myself as the high priest of this new doctrine ; building my temple from the offerings of the nation, of gold and precious stones and cedar and shittim wood ; its doors of fine bronze from Corinth, its curtains of badgers' skins ; and burnt offerings rising from the altars, and incense from the censers ; Levites chanting their psalms ; the rams' horns summoning the people to worship. And the teachings of this church should be of both new and old ; the Law and prophets, but also the sayings of Jesus and myself ; it should be a religion less rigid than the old, less servile than the new, so that folk should say, " Life is made easier for us, it is no hard matter to enter this new kingdom of which we hear ! " When I looked that night into the bag, and saw the few mean coins, I thought also, " When our church is built, if he but make me priest, there shall be offerings and ransoms for souls ; a treasury as in the temple on Moriah " ; I saw myself

conversing with rabbis from all parts, and disconcerting and refuting and instructing them ; I saw myself rich, honoured, famous throughout all Judea and Syria. . . . Wise men from over sea ; kings and queens, and astrologers, and those learned in many arts should come to my palace, and bring gifts, and do homage. In his own halls would I confront and rebuke Herod ; Herodias should pour wealth at my feet, if I would but forgive her incest.

But upon Peter, “ this stone——”

It was a name fitting him well ; rugged, rough-hewn. . . . A surly, ignorant, quarrelsome peasant ; ill-mannered, unlearned, already over puffed up with his importance. Did Jesus ask a question, it was Peter always who replied ; when Jesus called across the water, it was Peter who said, “ Bid me come ” ; if any came to words, Peter reproved them. I marvelled that Jesus should show so little discernment.

I longed often now for the company of Pilate’s house ; its plays and dances and pageants ; Drusilla, the pages, the scribes and men-at-arms. These were men, not afraid to spice their words with oaths, and with an eye for the beauty of women. Such women as followed us—save Mary—were old and ill favoured. And

these fisher-folk and peasants, from dawn to night, spoke of nothing but their Master, and their places in his kingdom which was now so nebulous and far away—the kingdom lying beyond the frontiers and gates of death. Give me, for my part, the royal purple, the crown, the pæans and triumphs, in this world, wide and beautiful enough.

I tired of their “ Master, Master ! . . . The Master says this ! The Master did this ! The Master bids us ! ” They were like children, not men, fawning upon him, drinking in his words, watching every action ; and ever buoyed up with hope of distant glory. Among themselves they quarrelled daily ; he was hard put to it to keep the peace. I longed, I say, for the arbour where I sat once with Drusilla ; for the great fire in the palace guard-room, where I could hear, as I passed, gusty laughter and song.

I went once with them to a certain village ; and here again they argued among themselves by the way : Which of us shall be greatest in the kingdom ? They came to ask the Master ; who called to him a little child playing in the village street. Setting him in the midst, he said, “ Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter at all.” And again he said, “ Whosoever shall humble him-

self as this little child, the same shall be greatest. And whosoever receiveth a little child in my name, receiveth me ; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me." They spake once also of faith. A man had brought to us his lunatic son, who had a dumb devil which tore him so that he foamed and gnashed with his teeth, and pined away. And none of us could cast the evil spirit out. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, and instantly it departed.

We asked why we had not been obeyed.

" This kind can come forth only by prayer and fasting," Jesus said. " Because of unbelief ye were powerless against the evil. But if ye had had faith even as a grain of mustard seed, you could have said even to this mountain, Remove hence from this place, and it should have been removed. . . ." Yet after this he spake to us of the manner of his death. Had he, then, this faith himself ? Once John and James went into a village of the Samaritans, and when the people would not receive them, they asked that fire might be called down from heaven to consume them, as fire was called down upon the sacrifice by Elias. . . . Could he not, then, have called down fire upon his enemies ? Or have made the mountains fall upon and crush them ? Or send into them evil spirits as once

into the swine ? Or raised a tempest which should have destroyed them ?

He to fear man, who held the keys of life and death ! Yet he prophesied that he must suffer many things, and die.

He began now to teach and heal only in Galilee, and would not go up into Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. But when the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand, we besought him to go up. " My time is not yet come," he said, " but go ye up ; the world cannot hate ye, but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto the Feast ; I go not up yet." We went therefore to the Feast. I was glad indeed to be away from sea and mountains, and once again among the haunts of men. This Feast, celebrating the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness, is the greatest among our people ; everywhere we heard music of tabret, harp, and viol ; everywhere were the green leafy booths of palm and pine and myrtle and olive ; and the streets were crowded with glad-faced people, bearing palm-branches, willows, or the fruits of peach and citron.

We went daily to the reading of the Law, the offering of bullocks on the great altar, and listened to the triumphant blast of the Temple

trumpets announcing our deliverance. To me, a Jew, the Feast was of deeper interest than to the simple Galileans who were with me. But there were many who knew of Jesus in the city, and, seeing his disciples, asked, "Where, then, is their Master? Is he here? Is he coming to the Feast?" I heard them speak of him among themselves: "He is a good man," said some; "he has done many mighty works in our country." But others said that he feared the rulers of the Temple. And some, again, that he was a *mesilh*, and deceived the people.

And suddenly we came upon him, teaching in one of the halls which opened from the Temple courts.

The hall was crowded. As he taught, many murmured and disputed: "Who is he? Whence hath he his learning? He is no rabbi that we should hear him; neither Shammai nor Hillel were his masters. He is but a Galilean carpenter, taught as a *ulem* by his mother, as a *naar* in the village school." And among those who listened were men who had known Hillel, Shammai, Nechaniah ben Hiskanah, the blind rabbi Joseph ben Butah, Johanan ben Zacchai—men of repute and great knowledge.

"What want we with this fellow?" I heard one mutter. "Have we not Zechaniahs still

to pray for us ? Ben Uzziels to write ? Ben Zacchias to prophesy ? ”

But others said, “ Nevertheless, he is a great teacher ; let us hear him.”

Jesus stood alone, undistinguished — yet, thought I, with a certain dignity—on the floor of many-coloured mosaic. “ My doctrine is not mine,” he said, “ but His that sent me. If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine. Did not Moses give you the Law ? And yet none of you keepeth the Law. Why go ye about to kill me ? ”

“ Who goeth about to kill you ? ” several shouted. “ You have a devil ; who seeketh to kill you ? ”

Jesus said, “ Moses gave you circumcision, and you circumcise on the Sabbath day, but you are angry with me because on the Sabbath day I have made a man whole. Judge righteous judgment.”

Some of the Jews said, “ Is not this indeed he whom they seek to kill ? Yet he speaks very boldly, and none lay hands upon him. Do the rulers know that this is Christ ? ”

“ When the Christ cometh,” said a little, snuffling, ill-clad Jew near me, “ when he cometh, no man knoweth, and no man knoweth whence he is.”

“Ye both know me, and whence I am,” cried Jesus. “I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true.”

“If Christ were to come, my masters,” said a peasant in the throng, “could he do more miracles than this man hath done? He hath raised the dead and cast out devils; five thousand were fed by him on a few small loaves and fishes.”

Some tried to lay hands on him, but there was much dissension among the people, and they feared to take him. And, the beginning of the great Hosanna sounding from the interior of the Temple, many went away.

In the last day of the Feast, Jesus stood up and cried, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

And many then said, “He is a prophet”; and others, “He is Christ.” “Shall Christ come out of Galilee?” asked one, scornfully. “He was to be of David’s seed, born in Bethlehem.”

The scribes and Pharisees gave commandment to the Temple guard that they should bring Jesus before them; but they went back to their masters empty-handed. “Why have ye not brought him?” they asked.

"Never man spake as this man speaks," said the captain of the guard.

"Are ye also deceived?" asked Hanan. "Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed on this fellow? He is but a Galilean carpenter."

A man said timidly, "Yet doth not our law condemn any man unheard."

"Art thou also of Galilee, good Nicodemus?" asked Hanan. "Search the prophets, and see; out of Galilee cometh no prophet."

And every man went to his own house.

Jesus went away into the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he came again to the Temple, and sat down and taught. The Scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman who had been taken in adultery.

They set her in the midst; her dress was dishevelled, and she cried bitterly. "Master," they said, "this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the Law commanded that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?"

Jesus stooped down, and wrote on the ground with his finger, but answered nothing.

And they asked him again, "Master, what shall be done to this woman? Shall she be stoned, as Moses commanded?"

He looked up. "Let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone," he said. They went out silently. And, turning to the woman, Jesus said, "Where are thine accusers? Hath no man accused thee?"

"No man, Lord," she said meekly.

"Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."

Some of the Jews came to Jesus, professing to believe in him. "If ye continue in my word," he said, "then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

They answered, "We are Abraham's disciples, and were never yet in bondage to any man."

Jesus said, "Any man who committeth sin is the servant of sin. Ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in your hearts. I speak that which I have seen of my Father, and ye do that which ye have seen of your father."

"Abraham is our father," they said scornfully.

"If he were your father," said Jesus, "ye would do his works; but ye seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I have had from God. Ye are of your father the devil, which was a murderer from the beginning."

“ You are a Samaritan,” said the Jews, “ and have a devil.”

“ Verily, verily,” Jesus said, “ he who keeps my words shall never see death.”

“ Now we know you have a devil and lie,” the Jews answered him, “ for Abraham is dead, and the prophets ; are you greater than Abraham ? ”

Jesus said, “ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and was glad.”

“ Why,” cried the Jews, “ you are not fifty years old yet, and can you have seen Abraham ? Seventeen hundred years has he been dead.”

“ Before Abraham was, I am,” said Jesus. . . .

And at that, much incensed, they took up stones to cast at him.

This took place in the Treasury of the Temple, where stand the great golden candelabra fifty cubits high, which shed their light throughout the city. Round this during the Feast the people join in festal dances ; at that moment the flutes and tabrets sounded from the steps leading to the court, and the Levites began the Song of Degrees. In the diversion caused by this, Jesus passed through the midst of his enemies. As he drew near the Temple Gate, he saw a man, blind from his birth, begging by the roadside. We asked—knowing this to be a judg-

ment of God—through whose sin, his own or his parents, he was thus afflicted. “Neither,” said Jesus ; “but that the works of God should be made manifest ” ; and he spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle, and anointed the blind eyes, sending him afterwards to wash in the Pool of Siloam. And, washing, he came back seeing and rejoicing.

His neighbours marvelled at this miracle, and asked whether it were indeed he, or one like him. And being told, “I am he,” they said, “How wert thou healed? Where is he that healed thee?” He knew not, for Jesus had passed on through the gate ; so they brought the man before the Pharisees. When they heard, they said—because it is unlawful on the Sabbath day to anoint even one eye with spittle except in case of dire need,—“This man is not of God, or he would keep the Sabbath.” But Joseph of Arimathea said, “Could a sinner perform a miracle like this?” And there was division among them.

“What say you,” one asked, “of him who has healed you?”

“That he is a prophet.”

The captain of the Temple guard was summoned, and ordered to send officers for the man’s parents. When they came, “Is

this your son," the Pharisees asked, " who was born blind, and can see ? "

" He is our son, and was born blind, but how he was healed we know not. He is of age ; ask him ; he shall speak for himself."

The man was brought before them again ; and they said, " Give God the praise ; this man is a sinner."

" Whether he be a sinner I know not ; one thing I do know, that I was blind, but now I see."

" What did he do to you ? " they asked.

" I have told you already. Why should I tell you again ? Do you also want to be his disciples ? "

" Not we," they laughed. " Fellow, we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses ; of this man we know nothing."

" Now herein is a marvellous thing," said the man who had been born blind. " Ye know not from whence he is, and yet he has opened my eyes. God heareth not sinners, but if a man worship Him and do His will, him He heareth."

" Dost thou, born in sin and stricken for sin, dare to teach us ? " cried the Pharisees, and cast him out. And, coming to Christ, he worshipped.

We were again in the Temple, when a certain

lawyer, wishing to tempt him, said, " Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ? "

" What readest thou in the Law ? " asked Jesus.

" ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself. ' "

" Thou hast answered rightly," said Jesus ; " this dō, and thou shalt live."

But the lawyer said, " Who is my neighbour ? "

Jesus said, " There was once a man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, who fell among thieves. They wounded him and stripped him of his raiment and left him half dead. A priest and a Levite, chancing to pass, looked upon him, but went by. But a Samaritan had pity on him, and bound his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and took him to the inn, and paid for his housing. Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among thieves ? "

" He that showed mercy," said the lawyer.

" Go thou, then," said Jesus, " and do likewise."

Many such stories did Jesus tell when teaching the people of his own country ; indeed, he spake chiefly in parables. The sheepfold, the

vineyard, the birds, the ship—these were the *Peshat* of his doctrine ; but those that had ears to hear found, as men finding hidden treasure, the *Sod* (mystery) that lay below it. “ One thing God spake, twofold is what I heard,” said Rabbi Akiba.

Yet have I heard, in Pilate’s house and in the synagogues, many teachers who spoke finer words. And once in Capernaum I spoke after Jesus ; and my friend Absalom ben Simeon, coming to me, said, “ Judas, thou art a greater teacher even than your Master. Why should he lead, while thou followest ? ”

It seemed now that tenebrous clouds were closing over the short and not unhappy ministry on land and sea. In Jerusalem, by his breaches of our Law, by his miracles, by his doctrines—above all, by his bitter attacks upon the priesthood, for here he seemed to fling aside all caution, and speak from a heart full of scorn and indignation—he had made many and bitter enemies. The shadow of the Cross fell athwart the checkered pathway. It was scarcely safe now for him to stay in Jewry.

IX

ALL his disciples, save myself, were men of lowly station. Some were fishermen and boat-builders ; one a potter ; one a saddler. Levi Matthew was a publican ; James told me that one afternoon Jesus had been at his turnpike, on the road at the foot of Olivet ; a team of pack-mules and some camels met, and the drivers quarrelled and exchanged blows with their whips. The publican spoke, trying to appease them, and Jesus, noticing him, called him to be his disciple.

Lebbæus, I have said, made and sold baskets ; he had a small booth in a low street near the Shushan Gate. I went there sometimes ; he borrowed money from the purse for his business, paying me usury, a tithe of which I gave as alms to the common fund. Thus was no harm done, the fund and I alike profiting. He had married a young and buxom wife, almond-eyed and with raven hair ; talkative as the parrot and

little cleaner than its companion, but good at all that concerned her husband's trade. It amused me to see that she looked to him with almost adoration, though for myself a week of the clack-clack of her tongue and her dirty fingers in the pot would have driven me beside myself. It amused me also to note how Lebbæus instructed her, constantly racking his brains for new parables, and copying the Master as closely as he dared without discovery. Thus, when Jesus spake of that which went from a man in the draught soiling him, and not that which entered a man, Lebbæus would say, "Mark, Rebecca, how when there is a sacrifice on the altar of the Temple, the goodly odour rises to God ; but the blood and ashes pass into the shaft beneath the altar, and so into the cavern underneath the Temple, and at last to the Tyropeon."

"And how dost thou rede that parable, Lebbæus ? " I asked.

"Oh—that what goeth down into the shaft, the ashes and the blood, defile a man, but the sacrifice and the smoke of its burning defile him not."

I shook my head at him. "Thou art a parrot, good Lebbæus, that hath got its lesson wrong," I said.

Among the wicker baskets, which he sold to the sellers of figs and dates and melons, stood a wicker cage for the parrot ; it spoke several words of Aramaic, and three or four of Latin. The ape was bound by an iron chain to a staple in the wall ; a mischievous beast, it tore all that came within reach of it to shreds. . . . That street in which he lived was very poor, and had many houses of ill-fame. One night Jesus came through it with Lebbæus and with me.

Women cried and beckoned to us from the windows ; and—the night was very hot ; so hot indeed, that sweat poured from us, and we scarce could breathe—in one open doorway lay a stout woman stripped of all garments. I turned towards Jesus to see what he would do or say. Surely, I thought, if he cries against the scribes and Pharisees as he does, he will reprove her ! But he said only, “ Poor woman, selling for bread that which is dearer far than bread. Judas, is there aught in the bag ? Give her what we have.”

“ Master,” I said, “ there is little enough, and we have many things to buy. Let me give the woman a few prutahs only.”

“ Not so,” he said ; “ she hath greater need than we.”

The woman was loud in her gratitude, but thought the gift evilly intended ; she clamoured for us to enter the house.

“ Woman,” said Jesus, “ there is a beauty for thee to find and a love for thee to find better than all these things. Seek them from Him Who giveth all unchurlishly to those that ask.” And he passed on, turning not his head.

I sometimes wondered whether the Master had such passions as other men. I wondered very often, when we visited certain friends we had at Bethany.

This village was but two miles from Jerusalem ; after the heat of the day, Jesus went there frequently. There were two sisters—Martha, a widow, whose husband (it was said) had been healed of leprosy by the Master, and Mary—and Lazarus their brother. Sometimes Jesus took with him one of us.

It was very pleasant to go to Bethany through groves of fig and olive, after the dust and clamour of the city. Here enemies could not follow him, and only friendly faces were about him. Martha, a buxom, dark woman of middle age, would busy herself with matters for our comfort ; they were wealthy folk. She brought the ewer and laver to wash our feet from the day’s soil and filth ; she made lavish prepara-

tions for our entertainment ; no meagre fare here of rice stew or pulse, but always fish from the lakes, or a pullet, or perchance butcher-meat purchased in the market. She went about her task with not a little good-tempered noise ; chaffing and hustling, telling stories and humming songs. Apart from his disciples, these were the closest friends Jesus ever made. A garden bright with flowers was behind the house, and a small orchard with an arbour covered with a vine, in which we sometimes sat. They kept a few sheep under the trees of the orchard. Mary, who was younger than her sister, loved better to sit at the Master's feet, and listen to what he said.

Lazarus I liked ; he was of a shy, gentle nature, fond of birds and flowers, and knowing all the old legends and histories of our race. He set up no claim to teach ; Jesus could not let any trifling matter pass without a parable. I think this was because when he did not speak in parable, his sayings were so new and strange folk could not understand them ; he loved to puzzle us, and set us questioning and thinking. The things he said seemed to turn the world upside down. And sometimes I could make nothing of his sayings. " John the Baptist," he said once, " was as great as Elias, or greater ;

yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Now what did he mean by that saying? We pondered it much in our hearts. Not until the very end, when many things that had been obscure before flashed out into dazzling clearness, did I know his meaning. There was THAT to come, which cast a blazing light on the whole pathway of his life among men.

There seemed to me, indeed, in those days little that was deep in his sayings ; I mean he saw not deeply, as I or Lazarus did. A bird to him was but a bird of the air ; a flower a flower ; a vine a vine. But Lazarus knew of the bird's haunts, its plumage and migrations, its note, its nest and eggs. He knew the markings of the fish ; where the panthers and hyenas and jackals had their lairs ; how the squirrel changed its colouring with the season ; if he spoke of the vineyards, it was to tell you how the vines were dressed, how the must was pressed from the grapes, what diseases the husbandmen had to combat. . . . And this, as I say, without preaching. Now I also, seeing an eagle in its flight, would follow in imagination until I also soared with it aloft in the dizzy blue, face to face with the sun ; visiting its eyrie among the crags and rocky pinnacles, seeing

the downy young clamorous for food. I said this once to Jesus.

"Master," I said, "an eagle to thee is but an eagle, a bird of prey, a speck in the high sky. But I take wing with it; where it goes, my spirit soars also; I fly with it to the very sun."

"Judas," he said, "hast thou not read or heard that He scattereth the proud in the imagination of their hearts? Nebuchadnezzar, setting his spirit thus on high in its pride, fell to the beasts of the field. Pray God for the humility of these little children in the village streets; for he that will not bend his spirit is broken."

Often Jesus spoke of the ancient days of Israel; but always, it seemed to me, with the thought, "Here did one prophesy of me; this signified my coming." . . . But I was very sure now that he was a man.

He seemed eaten up, I thought, with a vast self-consciousness; though he spoke rarely of his goodness, the knowledge that he was good was ever present with him. My father's Pharisaic righteousness had driven me once nigh unto madness; I grew to like less and less being alone in the company of Jesus. He was in truth good, but weak and mortal where his

own security was concerned; I knew that in Jerusalem at the Feast he had been fighting for his life. Hitherto he had saved it; but the sense of coming tragedy seemed still with him; he prayed much in secret, and I have surprised him in moments of profound sadness. Between us also—as between him and none of the others—seemed a veil drawn; he eyed me sometimes with what I thought suspicion and reproach.

I liked better the innocent and happy spirit of Lazarus, who could look upon me without distrust, speak to me without exhortation, walk with me without constant parade of righteousness.

“Now, Jesus,” Martha would sometimes say, “listen to what Lazarus telleth thee of the birds and flowers and life around thee, and learn how kings and great men before thee lived and died. Then thou mayest tell him the *Derush* (application) and *Sod* of what he says, and thou shalt know how thou too mayest become famous.”

Had we spoken thus, Jesus—or if not he, one or other of the disciples—would have chidden us sharply; when Martha spoke, he smiled.

“Why should Jesus want to be a great king, Martha?” Mary asked. “He would live in his palace on Mount Zion then, and would

forget us ; or come only with trumpeters, and runners, and a great retinue of servants and nobles. I like him so much better to come quietly like this, and sup with us in no fine state, and talk as friend talks to friends."

Indeed, in the years I knew Jesus nothing seems to me more pleasant than those peaceful evening hours, with the rose and gold and saffron of sunset covering the soft hills, and the shadows gathering, and the olives and fig-trees and cypresses growing black against the sky. We would stay sometimes until the shadows had all closed together in a universal darkness, and then, taking our lanthorn, go back to Jerusalem, talking quietly, or perhaps singing a hymn upon our way. There was a little guest-chamber in which Jesus sometimes slept.

Mary was very beautiful ; her face seemed to me something like the face of Jesus' mother ; she had the same soft dark eyes.

She was not beautiful in the way Drusilla was beautiful, nor Berenice, nor the slave-girl I had seen dance when in exile. But then I was young and hot-blooded. Yet even now I had eyes for a woman's face ; in the streets of Jerusalem, in the country districts, walking with the disciples, I glanced this way and that, while the others were almost Pharisaic in

their blindness. Christ had little knowledge, it seemed to me, of human nature, or less than I, who had lived in courts. He knew well the common people; but the hearts and passions of the powerful and rich he never altogether understood. Once at Pilate's court I saw Herod and Herodias and Salome. Now had Christ seen those princesses, he would have looked upon them with the indignant eyes of John, or of Elijah before Jezebel. But I saw more deeply. Not mere lust, but matters of high policy, with which common folk had nought to do, moved Herodias. She had no love for her husband, Herod Philip, the only Herod who held no throne. Daughter of Aristobulus, descended from the Maccabean princes, she saw in Herod Antipas—old and sensual as he was—one through whom she might sway the destinies of our race. It was not mere passion that moved her to the incestuous union. And the morals of Rome were not those of the Galilean hillsides.

Yet now that the heat of youthful passion had merged into soberer manhood, I loved to sit with Mary in arbour or in house, and speak of simple things. Her voice was soft and gentle as her eyes. Sometimes, while she worked, I held the coloured wools for her on my hand, or strung

coloured beads on their thread. She made small garments for the poor.

When Jesus was away from us, I came sometimes to Bethany ; and welcome always waited. Lazarus had a small vineyard on the hillside above the village ; I would go with him, and talk to his dressers, or watch the grape-juice being trodden out. And he was always pointing out and teaching in his own way—but of no misty kingdoms or righteousness more rigid than that of Pharisees and scribes ; it would be, “ You see yon little fox, Judas, slinking by the vineyard wall ? We have the masks and pads of twenty on our lodge door ; they do more mischief than their sires or dams.” Or we would go together to the top of the tower in the vineyard, where we could see the blue line of hills stretched before us ; he would cry out, “ There is an eagle ; look, Judas, look ! . . . That buff-backed heron cometh always at this hour. . . . Ah, there is a black stork in that fir-tree ; the common sort nests only on roofs.”

But Mary loved best to speak of the Master.

Jesus ! Jesus ! Our Master ! Our Lord ! . . . It was with her as with Peter, and James, and John. One would have thought there was no one else in the whole wide world. The slightest word, the smallest action, they puzzled

and wrangled over, to find some secret meaning. Mary was not thus ; but she always asked me eagerly for news of Jesus and his work among the people. What was his last teaching ? His last parable ? His last miracle ? Did I think his life in real danger ; and had he many friends in Jewry ? There was one Nicodemus ; it was said that secretly he had come by night to Jesus, and followed him ; did I know aught of him ?

“ He is a rich man, and third member of the Sanhedrin ; the *chakam* or wise man, they call him ; wise, but too timid to be powerful. Not one to thrust himself forward among the others.”

“ And Joseph of Arimathea ? ”

“ He, too, is rich ; he hath a great house in the city, and many servants. Yes ; I think he is in sympathy with the Master.”

“ Think you, Judas, that Joanna has any power with Herod ? Chuza is his steward.”

“ As much power as you or I. . . . Why ask you always of Jesus, Mary ? I have said all there is to say. He has few friends now in Jewry ; the rulers of the people are incensed against him. And small wonder, had you heard what he said before them. Rich men like not to be called children of the devil. The Jews know not what to say or think. Some call him

the Christ of God ; some, but a good man ; some, Elias or John ; some, a servant of Beelzebub. In Galilee and those parts many still believe. He fills them freely with bread ; he heals their sick. But in the city men have their own banquets, their own physicians."

" I like not——" Mary said, her face stern as I had not yet seen it. She paused, and the old look with which I was familiar came again. " What think you, Judas ? Who think you that he is ? "

I was silent.

" Because I am very sure that he is indeed the Christ. Who speaks as he speaks ? But a week past I saw him in the village street, near the inn ; and children clustered round him, holding out flowers. And one little child held his hand, and they raced through the street together, and Jesus cried out, " Mary, Mary, we are Cæsar's *biga* horses."

" He loves children," I said. " In Nazareth he made them many little toys in the shop."

" They are fond of you also, Judas ; but I think a little frightened of you."

I was pleased that anyone should fear me, yet like me also.

" But why speak always of Jesus, Mary ? " I asked once in irritation. " He is well, I say ;

there is nought fresh to tell of him. He is again in trouble with the Pharisees ; yesterday he dined with one of them, and his host marvelled that he had not washed before dinner. Jesus said, ' Ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter ; inside ye are full of ravening and wickedness. Fools ! did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also ? Woe unto you ! Ye tithe mint and rue and herbs, but pass over judgment and the love of God. Woe unto you ! Ye love the best seats, and greetings in the market-place ; and are as graves covered over but full of uncleanness within.' And a lawyer who was there said, ' Master, you reproach us also.' ' Woe unto you, lawyers !' said Jesus, turning towards him. ' Ye lade men with grievous burdens, but will not touch them with one of your fingers. Woe unto you ! Ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Woe unto you ! Ye have taken away the key of knowledge, and enter not in, but hinder those who will enter.' . . . And a great company of people were about the house, so many that they could scarce find standing-room ; because the people followed him everywhere. He turned to them and said, ' Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.'

And one other of the company at dinner said, 'Master, speak to my brother, that he divide his inheritance with me.' Jesus said, 'Who made me a judge or divider over you?'

"And he told them of a rich man who had no room to bestow his fruits, and said, 'I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there bestow my fruits and goods. . . . And I will say to my soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up there for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"; but God said, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'

"Thus hath Jesus made many new enemies, and these rich men, who were willing to be his friends. He courts danger, and yet, I think, fears it. His fame seems to make him reckless, and I think a little proud. One day word was brought that his mother needed him. He said, 'Who are my mother and my brethren?' as if he did not know them. And you know he believes that God is really his father. Perhaps he is ashamed of Joseph; Joseph is a clumsy workman."

"I am sure Jesus is not proud, or ashamed of his father and mother," Mary said. "I am sure of that."

"But why always Jesus, Jesus, Jesus?" I

said, for I began to love Mary, and to be jealous. And I told her about the others : John, and Peter, and Thomas. Then she rose, and went into the house.

Often, lying awake at night, or wandering among the hills, or in Zebedee's boat, I would think of Mary ; how she looked and was dressed ; what she had said, and the tones of her voice ; and one day—having pondered long, and knowing well that she was rich enough to be a poor man's wife—I blurted out the question which had been in my mind. She did not answer for some minutes, but sat down with her eyes cast down.

“ Mary, wilt thou marry me ? I have loved thee in secret since I knew thee,” I said. “ I am poor ; but the Master hath promised to make us rich. And when he cometh to his throne——”

“ He doth not mean rich in that way, Judas,” she said. And then, after a longer pause, “ No, I cannot marry, Judas.”

“ But why—why ? ” I asked. “ Thou art still young ; thou hast wealth ; there is none to hinder. And I will help Lazarus at the vineyard ; I had my own once, at Kerioth.”

For I thought, “ Our cause is all but lost, and this kingdom is but of cloud and dream. But Mary is rich ; I shall live here in comfort, and be his disciple as Joseph and Nicodemus are

his disciples. Perhaps even I may be elected to the Sanhedrin, and be a great man among my own people—Rabbin Judas ; yet, for the old days' sake, favour him in secret.”

“ He meaneth not to be rich in that way, Judas,” she said. And then, after a longer pause, “ No, I can never marry.”

“ But why—why ? ” I asked again. “ Thou lovest no one else ? ”

She hesitated, and looked for a space on the ground. “ I, too, will tell thee a secret, Judas,” she said at last. “ But thou must tell no one. I love the Master.”

“ But he looketh at no woman in that way,” I said. And then I wondered. Had he passions like other men ? He had seemed to be cold—but had he ? I thought of the bad women to whom I had so often heard him speak ; and then of Mary Magdalene. I was certain that she loved him.

To the women who followed us, it seemed to me, he was cold and almost distant, for all his indness ; I had seen no making of love. But in secret ? When we, his disciples, were not within sight or hearing—what then ? Had Mary Magdalene lost all vestige of the passion that had been her life-trade ? in those still, close evenings, under the violet skies and stars, in

the drowsy summer afternoons among the corn. . . . No, I was sure at least of that.

And one evening I had been on the shore with Jesus and two of the other disciples and the women. It was a languorous night ; the air laden with odours of the fruit trees ; the sea broke phosphorescent on the shore. We wandered among the rocks, bare-footed ; and Mary Magdalene cried suddenly that there was a cave which she would enter. . . . I followed her. In the half-darkness her eyes shone ; her dark hair streamed about her shoulders. She was very beautiful. I came near, and the passion of the night entered into me. " Mary ! " I whispered, " Mary ! The others—they are cold as the fish they net—are beyond the bend of the cliff. Mary ! " . . . My throat was dry. But when I touched her, she sprang at bay like a tigress. " Judas," she gasped, " I will tell the Master ! Thou his disciple, hearing him speak, seeing how he liveth ! "

Here also, Jesus—always and only, Jesus. " Once," I pleaded, " thou didst love men enough."

" That once was a thousand years ago," she said. " I love the Master ; but not with the love thou meanest."

" Jesus looketh at no woman in that way, Mary,"

I said to Mary of Bethany ; though I wondered secretly. He was young still ; was it natural, I thought, that he should be so often in the Magdalene's company, and she so short a time back a prostitute ? I should have thought little worse of him ; he had no wife. " His love for thee is something quite different," I said. " But my love is the love of a man for a woman, a man's love. And that is not a little to offer. If thou wilt marry me, thou shalt see more of the Master. Listen ; we will be married here in Bethany, and he shall be paranymp." The paranymp is he that escorts the bride. " And he shall turn water into wine for us, as he did at that wedding-feast."

I thought of Mary veiled, garlanded, attended by torches, singers, dancers, drums, and flutes ; and all village eyes on me, the bridegroom, and the rich Jews and members of the Sanhedrin at the wedding.

" Ah ! " she said, and spoke almost as if I had done her some hurt. And then, " No, Judas, I cannot marry you. I love him, and shall always love him, whether he loves me in the way you mean or not. . . . I have often wondered. He loves to be with us all ; he said once that he had no other home save Bethany."

" He will never love you in that way, Mary.

He is cold ; he loveth no woman in that way. Unless perchance the Magdalene ; she is ever with him, and she is very beautiful."

" She is ever with him because he healed her," said Mary. And she repeated the words, as if not quite certain, and anxious to assure herself ; " Because he healed her."

And after that she did not speak, save to say Yea or Nay.

* * * * *

It was soon after this that Jesus said, speaking of the signs of things to come, " I bring fire on earth and a sword ; not peace. Houses because of me shall be divided ; father against son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother."

He went again into the city for the winter Feast of Dedication. This Feast was founded by my namesake, Judas Maccabæus, to celebrate the cleansing of the Temple from its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. All over the city lanterns and lamps were lit ; the people carried palm-branches and boughs of citron through the streets ; Solomon's porch was hung with golden shields and crowns and emblems. While he was in the porch, the Jews came round him, asking, " How long are we to doubt ? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." " I have told

you, and ye believed not," Jesus said. " My works, which I do in my Father's name, bear witness of me." They took up stones again to stone him. Jesus said, " Many good works have I shown you ; for which of these dost thou stone me ? " " For a good work we stone thee not," they answered ; " but for blasphemy, because, being man, thou makest thyself God." But he went out from among them, and stayed for a while beyond Jordan.

Some of the Pharisees came now to him, when he had returned again to the city, warning him that Herod had sworn to take his life. " Tell that fox," he said, " that I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I must be perfected ! " And, lifting his hand in sorrow and compassion over Jerusalem which stretched white below him, " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," he said, " thou which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate, and ye shall not see me until the time come when ye shall say, ' Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' "

At this time he told many parables. There

was one of a great supper, to which a certain man bade many guests. But with one accord they made excuse ; this, that he had married ; this, that he must see a piece of ground he had just bought ; and another that he had bought five yoke of oxen. So the master of the house sent his servant into the streets to call from the highways and the hedges the poor, the halt, the blind, the maimed. . . . And there was another of a sheep that was lost ; and yet another, which he told in Martha's house also—because she lost a piece of money, and sought it with a candle until she found it,—of one who did likewise ; and of the rejoicing of the angels over a sinner who repented. Very often he told us parables as we sat in the house or orchard at Bethany. There was yet another of a prodigal son who returned to his father and was joyfully received ; and one of a rich man named Dives, and a beggar named Lazarus at his gate.

I sat one day at Bethany with Mary and Martha ; Lazarus had gone to his vineyard on the hillside. There was a certain parable he had just told us, of an unjust steward, which we could not understand. For it seemed against all his teaching ; that one should make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and be received by them into everlasting habitations.

“One must look below for his meanings,” said Mary. “In all he says is the *Sod* to be found ; he speaks never without meaning. I am sure that is so.”

“Is it true, Judas,” asked Martha, speaking indistinctly—for she had a wooden pin in her mouth, to fasten garments on the drying-line,—“Is it true what one told me yesterday, that Jesus performed mighty works even when he was a boy ? They say he turned his playmates into goats.”

“No,” said Mary ; “I asked him once, and he said ’twas but a foolish tale, and laughed. ‘I should turn children into lambs,’ he said. But here also is mystery. . . . Because there are goats, and there are children ; and might not God have power to change them ? Might not the inside which we cannot see be changed ? I know men who look men, but inside they are wolves, and swine, and other animals. I always wonder. None knows what another is really like ; the inside of another ; even in the same house and the same bed. About you, Judas, I have sometimes wondered ; you seem now hot, now cold, now luke-warm. Peter is always the same.”

Christ’s words seemed suddenly to stab me : “*I have chosen twelve, and one of you*

is a devil." . . . I muttered that all were not alike.

"Judas is our good friend, Mary," said Martha, sharply. "Thou shouldst not say such things. Now I must to the kettle ; it boileth over " ; for she was ever busy with her house.

And at that moment we saw men coming slowly down the hillside. They were labourers bringing in their master Lazarus, who had been struck with the day's heat. He was death-white, and his eyes were closed.

"Martha ! Martha !" cried Mary. "Our brother is ill !"

We carried him to his bed.

"Judas, wilt thou tell the Master ?"

Jesus was now in Bethany of Perea. I went to him and told him ; he answered nothing. But soon came another message, this time more urgent ; saying that Lazarus was sick unto death.

"Tell them that he is not sick unto death," said Jesus, and lingered for two days in Perea. But at last he started for the other Bethany. It was a journey of twenty miles. Yet he stayed outside the village.

We thought perhaps he feared the rich Jews who had met to mourn with the two sisters.

Martha, hearing that he was come, ran to meet him.

“ Lord,” she said, “ it is now the fourth day since we sent word that our brother was sick unto death. On that same day he died. Oh, Master, had you come, our brother need not have died.”

“ Thy brother shall rise again,” Jesus said.

“ I know,” said Martha, weeping, “ that he shall indeed rise on the last day.”

“ I am the Resurrection and the Life,” said Jesus, “ he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. . . . Believest thou this ? ”

“ Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God, which should come into the world.”

“ Come,” said Jesus, “ let us go unto Bethany.”

But at that came the Jews who were mourners, and Mary ahead of them, her eyes streaming with tears. “ Lord, Lord,” she also cried, “ hadst thou been here, my brother would not have died.”

“ Where have you laid him ? ” Jesus asked.

“ Lord,” she said, “ come and see.”

We went towards the tomb, cut horizontally in the rock. And Jesus wept. . . .

Was he charlatan ? He meant to raise him ;

if he were indeed dead, and not in trance as some say. When he sent that first message, that his sickness was not unto death, he meant to raise him. Then why weep, save as an actor who knows that he acts but in a play that is unreal ?

I have often wondered why he wept. Often we were away many days from Bethany ; he knew that in a few short minutes, by the speaking of a word, his friend would live again. . . . *If* he knew.

Jesus told them to take away the *golal* from the mouth of the tomb, and called, " Lazarus, come forth ! "

We waited breathless, and with hearts fast-beating. And from the tomb, ghastly white, and swathed in his white garments—bewilderment and wonder on his face,—came the lad they had said was dead.

Together, praising God—but the rich Jews silent and perplexed,—we came to the house.

I heard two Pharisees speaking upon the road.

" It is strange," one said. " Is he not Joseph's son, the carpenter of Nazareth ? Nothing great cometh out of Galilee."

" Yet I have a friend," said the other, " a merchant in Mæsolia, who has told us of men buried for many days, and then restored by

their magicians. They fill their nostrils with clay. Perchance his nostrils had been filled."

"But why?" asked the other. "Why should Mary and Martha do this thing?"

"Why should that impostor weep?" asked the other, scornfully. "This family believes in him, and are his friends. Think, now, how this miracle will bring him fresh disciples."

"The Sanhedrin will have to take some action," rejoined his companion.

We entered the house, where mourning had been turned into joy. And Mary sat at the feet of Jesus.

X

JESUS went from Bethany to Ephraim, on a hill beneath which lay the pilgrims' road to Jerusalem. We stayed there some days, and then followed the route of the caravans towards the city, halting on our way in the palm-girt town of Jericho. Great crowds followed us, for in this country many believed now that Messiah was really come. How vividly the remembrance of that journey stays with me—the last we were to take together, before that End of which the look of sadness and of destiny might have long since warned me ! Our way into Jericho lay across a desolate and barren country ; vast stretches of sand, with thorn bushes and black lizards everywhere ; cliffs and rocks also black, and honey-combed with caves. A black and lonely land, girt by the steep mountains of Palestine and Moab. Jesus taught daily, sometimes in the village synagogues, but more often in meadows near the roadside. Many people

also he healed ; ten lepers among them, one of whom only returned to give him thanks, and he a Samaritan.

He spoke still in parables against the Pharisees, his enemies. "Two men," said he, "went up to pray in the Temple, one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and said, 'God, I thank Thee I am not as other men are, extortioners, adulterers, unjust, even as this publican. I fast twice in the week ; I give tithes of all I possess.' But the publican, standing afar off, did not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' And he went down to his house justified, rather than the other."

Journeying towards the city of his enemies, it seemed impolitic to me that he should still attack the powerful and rich. He argued against some who came questioning him about divorce ; and once when a young man seeking eternal life went away sorrowful because he would not yield up his possessions, Jesus said that it were easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. But he loved ever the poorer folk and publicans ; above all, he loved the little children. Some mothers on our

journey brought their children that he might lay hands on them and bless them. We were in haste, and I said to the women, "Take away your children; the Master has no time for such as they; his business is with men."

Jesus rebuked me, saying, "Of such as these is my kingdom."

The thought of what was soon to pass seemed in his mind. In a parable he spoke of the lord of a certain vineyard who called his labourers to take their hire. And to those who had come at the eleventh hour was given a penny; and to those who had borne the heat and burden of the day, also a penny.

He told this, I think, that those who had not believed might yet follow him; for indeed the eleventh hour was near at hand.

One day he took us apart, and prophesied again of his death. "We go now to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man shall be betrayed, and mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, and put to death. But the third day he shall rise again."

And Salome, Zebedee's wife, came to him with James and John, and asked that they might sit, one on his right hand, and one on his left, when he came into his kingdom. Jesus said, "Ye know not what ye ask; can ye

drink of the cup whereof I drink, and be baptized with my baptism ? ” They said, “ We can.” He said, “ You shall drink of that cup, and shall be baptized with my baptism ; but that is not mine to give. It is to be given to them for whom it is prepared.”

We were pleased with this answer ; yet wondered who the two should be. The Zebedees stood back abashed, we smiling at their discomfiture. But I thought, “ Even in this dream-kingdom he seemeth to have but little dominion.”

When we passed out of Jericho, Jesus healed two blind men by the wayside, and later stayed at the house of a publican named Zacchæus, who had climbed into a sycamore tree to see him, and had been summoned to come down. Many murmured that he should be the guest of such an one, when near Jericho so many rich men lived.

On my journey with Lebbæus, we had taken neither scrip nor purse ; but now, as I have said, we had a common purse for our needs, which they gave me to keep, and from which I bought such things as we needed on our journey. It was on the day that I was given the purse he spoke his parable about the ten pieces. Six days before the Passover, we came to Bethany,

staying with our friends. Martha made us a great supper, of cakes and fish and fatted fowl, and served while we ate. And Mary, entering the room, took a box of alabaster, containing Indian spikenard, and brake it, and anointed the head and feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. The whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment, of which there was nigh a pound, very costly.

Yet often there had scarce been wherewithal in the purse to supply our needs.

I said, "Why shouldst thou waste this precious ointment? It might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor."

Jesus said, "Let her alone; she hath wrought a good work upon me. The poor ye have always; but me you have not always with you. She hath poured this ointment on my body for my burial; and wheresoever this gospel is preached, throughout the whole world, this that she hath done shall be spoken of as a memorial to her."

And I saw that Mary's eyes were filled with tears. That evening I was with Martha in the house, but, going out suddenly in the gloaming to the harbour, I found Jesus and Mary sitting there together; they spoke almost in a whisper; but as I drew near Mary raised her

voice and said, "No, Master, no ; thou shalt not die like this at the hands of these cruel men. Why shouldst thou die ? "

He said, "I came not to do my own will, Mary, but the will of Him that sent me." His voice seemed to me very sad.

Sometimes for my need I had taken money from the purse—yet little ; and now I was incensed that so great a sum should have been poured away. We had nothing for our discipleship ; I had given up my place in Pilate's house, and my Kerioth vineyard, without reward. Many a day we travelled foodless, and were lodged very meanly. When I reproved Mary for her waste, Jesus looked very sternly upon me ; I thought I saw suspicion in some of the disciples' faces. "In Jerusalem," thought I, "I will beg money from some of the rich Jews for the Master ; there are still those who believe ; and perchance I may yet repay myself." This I should not have thought if I had not seen how little wealth was valued by these people. But all that I had hoped and planned seemed frustrated. My place in Pilate's house, my hopes of advancement and wealth in his service, my patrimony at Kerioth—all had gone. Mary had refused me ; the glorious kingdom we had been promised, the twelve thrones on which

we were to sit judging the twelve tribes of Israel, the looked-for kingdom of this world, the promised kingdom of the next—seemed alike but barren and worthless dreams.

Yet were my eyes to see the entry of a king into his Zion. . . .

We came to the Mount of Olives, and Jesus sent Peter and Andrew into Bethpage. And he said, "In the village ye shall find an ass tied, with her colt beside her; the colt shall never have been ridden. Loose him and bring him. And if any should say, 'Why do ye this?' say that the Lord hath need of him."

They went down into the village, a small place which gained its livelihood by sending figs to the markets of Jerusalem. I had been there sometimes with Lebbæus, selling his baskets. At the back of one of the houses was a stable-yard, and, tethered to the door, an ass with a fine white colt. As Peter unloosed it, a man ran out.

"What doest thou with my colt?" he said.

"The Lord hath need of him," said Peter.

"Who is thy lord?"

"Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God."

He said, "Take him, and peace go with you."

The two placed their garments on the colt's back, and led him by the bridle to Jesus. Lebbæus said to me, "Hath not the prophet

spoken truly, O Judas ? Rememberest thou his words—‘ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ; behold thy king cometh unto thee : he is meek, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding on an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.’ ”

“ Yet can he save himself ? ” I thought, but kept my counsel.

We ascended the road which leads between the Mount of Olives and the Hill of Evil Counsel. And crowds began to follow, some running ahead and strewing their garments on the path, or flinging before him boughs of olive and fig and myrtle which they tore from the trees. We were swept away by the enthusiasm of the triumph. “ Hosanna ! ” we cried. “ Hosanna ! Hosanna to the Son of David ! Blessed is the King of Israel who cometh in the name of the Lord ! Hosanna in the highest ! ”

The crowd caught up the cry : “ Hosanna ! Hosanna ! ”

Children, running from the cottages by the way, flung their garments down, and strewed boughs before the colt, which stepped proudly, with quivering ears ; and they, waving branches of palms, cried also, “ Hosanna ! Hosanna ! Hosanna to the Son of David ! ”

Some Pharisees standing near cried, “ Master,

rebuke thy disciples ; they make thee one even with God."

Jesus said, " If these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out."

How glorious that progress ! Here—for a brief hour—was the summit and zenith of our hopes. . . . What lay before us ? My spirit was ever in the height or in the depth. If I had been Jesus, I should have ridden forthwith through the heart of the city to the Pretorium, gathering followers as I went ; sending some to the money-changers and rich merchants, some to armourers, some to stables for horses and asses. And I should have taken Pilate's palace by storm—knowing the ways and gates of it, and how they were guarded ; and sent officers to bring the Sanhedrin and rulers before me ; and commanded the bells of the Temple to be rung, sacrifices to be offered, alms to be scattered, the *chazzanim* to blow great draughts on the Temple trumpets. And in the Treasury should there have been dancing, with flutes and tabrets and drums ; and in the streets wine without price. . . . This should have been my triumph. Then would I have sent hewn yokes of oxen throughout Syria summoning the tribes to arms—" To your tents, O Israel ! "—and made alliances with the Arabian Emir, and

Sampageranus of Emesa, and other kings ; and Herod Antipas should I have flung, blind, into the Black Fortress—as the Great Herod blinded Babha ben Buhta ; and had myself crowned king in Zion, in Sepphoris, in Samaria, and in Damascus.

All this was in my dreams.

Through green meadows and under trees, we climbed slowly the mountain road. And suddenly, at a sharp bend of the hill, we saw Jerusalem below us in all its glory ; synagogues and marts and houses ; pinnacles and minarets of snowy marble ; thronged streets and grass-grown alleys ; pools and steps and columns. But glorious above all—the Temple of the Lord of Hosts.

There were the gates overlaid with gold and silver ; the gate of fine Corinthian brass ; the porches and cloisters ; the marbles of red and white ; the great clusters of golden grapes ; the rich mosaics of the courts ; the spiked roof of gold glittering in the sun.

Jesus checked the colt ; we stopped ; the crowd stood at gaze. Tears streamed down his face.

“ If thou hadst known,” he cried, “ even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! But now they are hid from

thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast trenches about thee ; and compass thee round ; and keep thee in on every side ; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and they shall leave in thee not one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation."

We passed on into the city, to the Shushan Gate ; and the people thronged about us, joining their Hosannas to our own, and waving branches of palms. And from every lattice and every door came men and women and little children, running, and crying out Hosanna. . . . But there were many who watched in scornful silence.

Jesus went alone into the Temple, and returned afterwards to Bethany. And was this to be all ? A little shouting ; a few garments flung upon the pathway ; palms waving—and then return ? Not so would I have entered my kingdom. I felt scorn in my heart for one who had promised and essayed great things, and failed so miserably. An actor merely, playing at kingly state ; acting now, as he acted when he wept before the sepulchre of Lazarus.

I stayed behind in Jerusalem. Well, I kept the purse. . . . There were friends I knew

dwelling near the Sheep Gate ; I took my evening meal with them, and went afterwards to the Pretorium. Here, too, some remembered me.

“ So thou hast become a disciple of the Nazarene ? ” asked a porter at the gate, a surly fellow, yet one for whom I had some liking. “ Little profit in that business, friend. Best come back here to thy old companions. We are to have a great play to-night by torch-light. . . . But I doubt now if they would take thee back.”

“ I have it in my mind,” I said. “ Is Drusilla still in the palace ? ”

“ Drusilla ? Drusilla ? ” He scratched his matted head. “ Ah, now I recall her. A little, dark, slim maid, pretty as sin itself.”

“ Has sin become pretty in Jerusalem, then ? ” I said. “ There are some I know who say otherwise.”

“ There looks out the Nazarene. In the Pretorium it is not so ugly as in Galilee, perchance ; our men-at-arms are lustier fellows than your fisher-folk and cobblers. . . . ’Twas with one of the Augustan band Drusilla ran away ; a curled and scented young centurion. But he left her at Cesarea.”

“ Where is she now ? ”

He pursed up his lips. "Now that's telling. But for one of your sacred shekels, perhaps." . . .

I put my hand in the bag.

"She dwells in the Street of Lanterns, hard by the Shushan Gate. And rumour says she is less shy than when you knew her, old friend."

I asked of this one and that ; some had gained advancement ; some were dead. He said good night, and closed the wicket.

How easy—I thought—had I been Christ with all those followers at my back, to enter the Pretorium ! They were unready for surprise ; a dozen lusty fellows could have beaten down resistance. Peter, bald as he was now, was hardened by his sea-life, and a man of some strength ; Andrew such another. In an hour we could have been feasting in Pilate's halls ; ransacking his treasuries ; drinking his wines ; clothing ourselves in armour and fine raiment. I should have distributed arms, gifts, food to the people ; the hewn yoke should have gone that night throughout Israel ; in a week all Syria would have been ours.

And Jesus—rides on his ass's colt down from the Mount of Olives ; enters the gate among the pæans of the people ; listens to a few Hosannas ; and, with the beginning of a mighty triumph in his ears and eyes, goes tamely back

again ; because, forsooth, feet travel-stained and hoofs of beasts may not pass at that hour beyond the set limits within Jerusalem.

What a mock of kingship ! . . .

I went to the narrow alley near the gate which was named Street of Lanterns, and found Drusilla. There was a fine gold ring upon her finger when I left her ; but our purse was nearly empty.

XI

THE morning bells rang from the Temple when I left Drusilla's house.

My head was heavy with wine and lack of sleep ; I looked to seeing Christ again, and the disciples, with some self-shame. Yet who puts fire into the blood of man ? These simple folk of Galilee were cold-blooded as the fish they caught ; or hot only when their golden thrones were challenged. I looked in the purse ; it was nearly empty.

Many of them looked upon me with suspicion ; I thought even Jesus himself. " Well, he is no master of mine," I said. " Son of David ? He is son of a poor carpenter, and a clumsy one at that. A poor carpenter—and a poor village maiden. And he rideth on an ass's colt to his triumph ; and crieth like a babe over his capital ; and may not pass travel-stained through the city, so goeth meekly back. He walketh in daily fear ; he could not save John, he

cannot save himself. He breaketh Sabbaths ; toucheth the unclean ; doeth mighty works, and weepeth while he doeth them."

" And one of you is a devil."

How these words rankled !

I entered the Temple. I had not been long in its courts, when a Pharisee approached me.

" Art thou not a disciple of him who calls himself Christ ? Cometh he again to the Temple ? "

" I know not," I said shortly.

But Jesus entered with his disciples. Lebbæus came up to me.

" The Master did a strange work to-day, Judas," he said, with his stupid titter of satisfaction, rubbing his thin hands. " He was an-hungered, and saw a fig-tree afar off having leaves. But there was nothing but leaves, for the time of figs, thou knowest, is not yet come. And he cursed the tree, saying, ' Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever.' "

" Why curse it, if the time of figs is not yet come ? " I asked.

" I do not know," said Lebbæus. " I suppose the tree should have borne him fruit as he was an-hungered, and is the Son of God. Do you remember how he spake to us once of the fruitless fig-tree ? How one came to his vineyard for fruit, and seeing none on a fig-tree he

had planted, said, ' These three years I came seeking fruit on this tree, and find none. Cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ? ' But the dresser said, ' Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it ; and if it bear fruit, well ; and if not, after that thou shalt cut it down. ' "

" Yes, I remember," I said. Now nearly three years had I been Christ's disciple.

By the Eastern Gate, in the very Court of the Gentiles, were stalls of the usurers and money-changers, giving silver shekels and half-shekels for the coinage of Rome and Greece ; dove-sellers ; herdsmen with droves of oxen ; sheep of Kedar ; booths in which phylacteries and talismans were sold. The floor was foul with trampled ordure ; the stench and clamour nigh intolerable. Jesus stooped down, and made a whip of rushes from the pavement. " It is written," he cried in a loud voice, " that my house shall be called the House of Prayer ; ye have made it a den of thieves." And he overthrew the tables and booths, and drove away the sheep and cattle, so that people fled before them.

" Is he mad ? " I whispered to Lebbæus. " They seek to kill him ; twice they have taken up stones ; yet he tempteth them thus." But he

passed out unharmed, and the next day came again, and taught in the courts. Not yet was his triumph ended ; the boy-Levites of the Temple choirs, seeing him, clustered round, and hailed him in their sweet, clear voices with Hosannas.

“ Hearest thou what they say ? ” said the rulers.

“ Yea ; have you never read, ‘ Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise ’ ? ” And he returned again to the family at Bethany.

I went with him and the others ; and, returning, we saw that the fig-tree he had cursed had withered.

When he entered the Temple, the chief priests and elders came to him and asked by what authority he did these things. Jesus said, “ If you answer me, I will answer you. . . . The baptism of John, whence was it ? ” Now if they said from heaven, he would have said, “ Then why believed ye not ? ” but if of man, the people would have stoned them. So they said. “ We cannot tell.” “ Neither,” he said, “ tell I you by what authority I do these things.” And he spake a parable of a man having two sons, whom he sent to work in his vineyard ; and one said, “ I go,” but went not ; and the

other, "I go not," but went. "Which of these," he asked, "did the will of God?"

"The first," they said.

Jesus said, "Verily, I say, the publicans and harlots enter the kingdom before you. For John came in the way of righteousness, and ye believed not; but the publicans and harlots believed. Now listen to another parable: A householder made a vineyard, and sent his servant in due season for the fruits thereof. But the husbandmen beat him; and another they killed; and a third they stoned. And he sent his only son, saying 'Surely they will hear him.' But they said, 'He is the heir; let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.' . . . And they killed him; and the master of the vineyard came and killed the wicked husbandmen, and gave the charge of his vineyard to others. . . . Thus the scripture is fulfilled, that the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. Therefore the kingdom is taken from you, and given to another." . . . And again he told them of a man which made a wedding-feast, to which, when the bidden guests would not come, he brought in those from the highway. And at the feast was a man without a wedding-garment; whom the king, seeing, had cast into outer darkness.

The eleventh hour seemed indeed very near. In all his discourse now, I thought, ran the menace of coming doom ; no longer were the parables of flowers, and sheep in the meadows, and ships upon the sea. In each (or so it seemed to me) was some foreboding, the sense of hurrying catastrophe. Did he speak to them only in scorn and anger ? I think he tried, so near the end, to bring some to his side. I have seen him in an agony to save those to whom he spoke ; as if he *knew*, yet could not penetrate their consciousness with his knowledge. Yet why ? Why this agony to bring conviction ? Had I taught, I should have given them my knowledge ; and let them take or leave it as they chose.

The Pharisees tried yet once more to enmesh him. There were in Jerusalem certain Herodians, followers of the Idumean house ; many of them ill-livers, but in favour with Rome. And the Pharisees sent some of these with the question whether it was lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar. "Bring me a denarius," said Jesus. And a coin was brought, bearing the features of Tiberius, and the legend, "Pontifex Maximus." "Whose image and superscription is this ?" asked Jesus.

They said, "Cæsar's."

“Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,” he said, his eyes flashing, for they had feigned innocence. Christ hated painted Pharisees. The same day came the Sadducees to tempt him, questioning him about the resurrection of the dead ; and, when he had answered them, a lawyer of the Pharisees, about the greatest of all commandments. And the greatest of all, he said—as in the beginning to me at Nazareth—was Love.

And then Christ himself questioned the Pharisees. It seemed to me that he fought desperately against a fate which he might yet avert ; carrying the war of words even to their own camp. “What think ye of Christ ?” he asked. “Whose son is he ?”

“The son of David,” they said.

He said, “How doth David call him Lord, then, saying, ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool ?’ If David call him Lord, how can he be his son ?”

Then Jesus turned to us and to the multitude, and spake as I had never heard him speak—as none had ever dared to speak—against the men who were even now thirsting for his blood. “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat,”

he said, " what they bid you do, therefore, do ; but do not after their works. They say, and do not. They bind on men's backs burdens which they will not move with one of their own fingers ; they do their works to be seen of man ; they make broad their phylacteries, enlarge the borders of their garments, love the best rooms and places at the feasts, and greetings in the market, love to be called ' Master, master.' "

I had seen his eyes flash, heard his words come scornful and contemptuous from his lips before this when he spake of their hypocrisies ; but never as now. It was like a tempest of sonorous thunder, of keen and incandescent lightning, of hissing rain, of thrashing, lashing, biting, cutting, over-setting wind. His eyes seemed afire ; his face was pale and set. " Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! Ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men, and go not in yourselves, nor let others go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! Ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers ; ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites——"

Again and again, and yet again—eight times I counted—came like a thunder-clap of indignation, " Woe ! Woe ! Woe ! " And after-

wards, now in fierce anger, now in bitter scorn, were his indictments : that they compassed land and sea to make one proselyte, and then made him twofold more the child of hell than they themselves ; that they said, Whosoever should swear by the Temple, it was nothing, but that he who swore by the Temple gold was guilty ; that they paid tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and neglected weightier matters ; that they cleaned the outside of cup and platter, but were filthy within ; that they were like whited sepulchres, within full of dead men's bones and uncleanness. Fools and blind ! Fools and blind ! . . . The words scathed and lashed until men winced before them. Serpents, generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ? ” I watched the faces before me. In the very front was a tall, dark, handsome Pharisee, richly dressed, and with much jewellery on his person. His thin lips wore a look of answering contempt and scorn, but I saw that his hand clenched and unclenched, and his face was very pale. A small, fat greasy Sadducee near by whispered to a companion, and sniggered. But Christ's eye fell on him for a second, and he was struck suddenly dumb.

We were in the Temple Treasury, and the people were casting into the trumpet-shaped

coffers gifts of silver and of gold. Jesus sat down, and wiped the drops of sweat from his brow. And just then a widow-woman dropped in two prutahs.

He turned to us and said, " This poor widow hath cast in more than all who have put into the treasury ; for they have cast in of their abundance, but she all she hath."

And Jesus went afterwards to the Mount of Olives ; and because he had spoken of coming things, and of the days when the Temple should be destroyed, we asked him when these things should be, and what would be the signs. And he said, " Take heed that none deceive you, for many shall come, saying, ' I am Christ,' and nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes. And you shall be afflicted, and some killed, and shall betray one another, and hate one another, and false prophets shall arise. But he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

He spake also of the coming of the Son of man. And again he taught in parables, of ten virgins, five wise and five foolish ; and of a man giving talents to his servants, and rewarding them according to their works. He told us also of the day of the Last Judgment, when the sheep

and goats should be divided ; and how those who had fed the hungry and clothed the naked should be rewarded, but the others cast into everlasting fire.

When he had finished all these sayings, he reminded us that in two days would be the Passover, and after that he would be betrayed and crucified.

Near the Temple precincts was the palace of Caiaphas the High Priest, and here now the chief men of the city, roused at last to action by the words of Christ—which had indeed seemed to goad them into some concerted activity,—met in conclave, to debate the question of his death. Near the foot of the Mount of Olives was a small wood of firs, in which sometimes I loved to walk. Many things were now in my mind, needing clear and solitary thought. The ministry of Galilean mountains, of lake-side, of village and city from Cesarea to Hebron, from Gadara to Sarepta, was indeed ended. Above us hung the tenebrous clouds of coming tragedy ; above all of us, it seemed, and not alone above our Master. . . . The cause was indeed lost.

I passed from the glare of the afternoon sun, into the shade of the firs, and paced the needle-carpeted ground in deep thought. How calm

it was, and the scent of the firs how sweet ; and how dazingly blue the sky between the branches ! Now, thought I, has come the crisis of my fortunes. He has said that he must die ; and when he dies we shall be scattered. Peter and John will not make me their leader ; I own none of them as master. Can he still save himself ? Will he save himself ?

If he could, and did, I knew what lay still before us. The daily bickerings of his disciples, mean men and ignorant, of whose very faces I began to tire. The old, old parables and stories, little varied ; the taunts at men richer than ourselves. The hot and weary days on stony hillsides, often without food. The squalor and noise of pressing crowds. And at last death, and perhaps this long-promised kingdom opening before our eyes.

If not ? . . . I remembered what he himself had prophesied. We should be afflicted, we should hate one another, we should be killed, we should betray one another. A fine master for a man ! I had given up Pilate's house, I had given up Drusilla, I had given up——

Drusilla. . . . She loved me ; she was still very beautiful. And on her finger now was the gold, gemmed ring I had bought her with money from our purse ; and in her house now,

perhaps looking for my coming through the lattice, as the mother of Sisera looked out long ago, she sat. . . .

I had loved little Berenice ; she was married now, grown coarse and fat, to a fig-dealer in Kerioth. I had loved Mary ; she was still at Bethany with Lazarus, weeping secretly for the danger of one she loved, and loved hopelessly. And now—Drusilla.

How lonely my life ! Living with the others, eating and drinking with them, I stood utterly alone. My thoughts were not their thoughts—had not that been said by God ? Yes ; and, like Him, I stood alone among the others ; different from them, greater than them ; dreaming of empire where they thought but of the day's catch ; planning, scheming, plotting secretly. " Jesus ! Jesus ! The Lord ! The Master ! " I joined not in their chatter. Mary had said I seemed luke-warm, or blowing now hot, now cold. Nor was I like Christ himself. He saw a bird in the Syrian sky—'twas but a bird ; but I flew with it to heaven's gates. I have stood on a peak of Hebron, and raised my arms, and in imagination cast myself harmlessly through the buoyant air. I have looked down from a roof-top, and seen the people like emmets ; and have said to myself, " Now could I crush

you with my hand ; I could spit on you and drown you ; I could fling a pebble that should slay a thousand of you." How I hated these puling, whining, sweating common folk who toiled after us with their " Master, Master ! "

Yet. . . . There was a day when a lad went down into Nazareth from Jerusalem, and stood waiting in a village shop, and bent in homage and in grateful love under a blood-red sky. And another memory flashed through my mind ; of a cross branded in blood-red on the bronzed arm of a galley-slave at Joppa.

But a few days since, the Hosannas had sounded in our ears, and the shouts hailing him Son of David, King of Israel, Son of the Most High God. He was to be betrayed, and crucified.

Then one must betray him.

" I have chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil."

The words stung me still. He had looked at me ; and then, I think, such love as I had left changed to almost hate. I was tired of that stainless goodness, those sorrowful and reprov-ing eyes. James had spoken about the almost empty purse, and the lids of his fanatical eyes flickered, like a bird's, when I spoke of alms. I think I had no friend among them all.

"If he be the Christ," I thought, for my anger flashed at the recollection of slighting words and turned shoulders, "if he be the Christ, he can save himself. He saves others." And then I remembered that in three days he was to rise again. It was but a drama, then, acted beneath the eyes of heaven. And just so the raising of Lazarus had been a play for our diversion and amazement, that we should wonder, and admire, and worship. Else, why had he wept?

"Let him save himself, if he be indeed the Christ," I said. And, with that, came this thought: If he were given into the hands of his enemies, he must declare himself. Elias, John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth—THE CHRIST, the Son of the Living God. Once and for all, Israel should know whether this were indeed its king.

I came to the edge of the wood. But a squirrel ran across the path, and I remembered how once near Bethany a squirrel had gazed at us with its bright eyes, and Jesus spoke a parable of hoarded treasure. We had come down the hill together, in the cool of the evening, and he saved me from a stumble on the slippery path

"I cannot," I muttered, and stood with un-

certain fingers at my lips. Yet he must be betrayed, and crucified ; but to rise again. And here another thought came : If indeed he be God, his betrayer shall stand side by side with him for ever, equal in greatness. He had said that Mary's act at Bethany should be spoken of for a memorial wheresoever throughout the world his gospel should be preached. I had lost all in following him. But at least I might not lose the greatness that had been my earliest dream. Jesus and Judas should stand side by side.

I came to the city. Abiathah the Levite stopped me ; a talkative man, not unfriendly to our cause. He had lived in Kerioth, where his father had a vineyard. " Tch, Tch, Judas," he said, with a curious clicking of the lips, " what is this of your master ? His late discourse hath brought the whole hive about his ears. If I were of his disciples, I should get me to Samaria or the Phœnician coast. The Pharisees have sworn to root out the business ere it go farther. Ay, ay, I should get me hence before there be trouble."

" He is no more master of mine," I said. " He goeth too far for my liking. I am a Jew, Abiathah ; these others Galileans."

Half a furlong farther down the street, Peter

ran into me. He had a strange manner of walking, like a ship in a stiff gale, staggering and tacking. "Ho, Judas," he said, clapping his great hand on me in the way he had. His dim blue eyes scanned my face. "Thou lookest as if thou hast seen a spirit, and that unfriendly. Are there Djinns that guard the money-bag? I have heard of them keeping treasure caverns in my own hills. Or didst thou bring thy familiar from Emesa?" He laughed his great laugh. How I hated him then! The lined, rugged, masterful, suspicious face; those eyes keen enough though dimmed with winds and seas and distances; the bald, glistening head with its fringe of hair; the uncouth, burly, bull-necked body.

"The Master said," he chuckled, "that he had chosen us twelve, and one had a devil. . . . Or was it, Is a devil? There, good Judas, look not so pale and angry; I mean no harm."

I walked on. Between my clenched teeth, I whispered, "If he be God, let him save himself now. Let him save himself. We have waited long enough for this kingdom; his fig-tree is barren, and must yield its fruit, or be cut down. Soon we shall see if he is Messiah, or but a man who cannot save himself from his enemies."

I went in hot haste of my anger to the gate of the High Priest's palace. But again I hesitated, and went back. I passed down a network of small streets, aimlessly ; now thinking, " He said that he must be betrayed ; someone must betray him " ; yet again thinking, " On such a day he did this, said this. . . ." I stopped before a small khan in a little square. There were two stunted palm-trees ; the fierce sun beat down on a motley crowd watching some incident or entertainment. Men sat before the khan playing a game they had with small pieces of bone, and drinking ; I heard the strains of barbaric music, a monotony of thumping with the clanging now and then of triangle or some brass instrument. I pressed my way forward. Here were Jews, a few peasants from the country, swarthy Arabs in their blue cloaks, a knot of soldiers from the garrison, and many children. A fruit-seller had paused, with his wares, black with flies, upon his head ; here stood a water-carrier ; boys had climbed the palms.

A man and a boy sat together on the sandy ground. The man was clad but in a loin-cloth and a turban of many colours ; the boy in the cotton loin-cloth. A flat, square box of mosaic was on the ground before them. The

boy had a small drum ; at the side of it was a brass gong, which now and then he struck. The man had in one hand, and at his lips, a flute ; he played melancholy notes, and the saliva dribbled down his long thin beard. In his other hand he held a snake, green and black. The markings seemed to me very beautiful ; they were lozenge-shaped, as regular as if some human hand had just painted them, and as bright. The snake swayed in keeping with the music, slowly at first, then convulsively, as the music became wilder and more wild. Once he thrust it towards me ; the needle-like tongue flashed and quivered. I started back.

Dim memory of prophecy in the world's dawn came to me : "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*"

The man took another snake from his box ; this time, black and yellow. These are the cruel colours, it seems to me ; the tiger is black and yellow, the wasp, the deadly fungus, the eagle, the lion.

Suddenly he thrust aside the snake, putting it in its box, and snapping to the lid. His black, glittering eyes fixed themselves upon me.

"Wilt thou learn thy future ?" he said.

“Destiny is in thy face. For six prutahs, wilt thou know?”

Destiny in my face! And destiny, I thought, was in the face of Jesus. He and I, we stood apart from other men. I counted the money with trembling fingers from the bag.

He took from his loin-cloth a small bowl of red earthenware, and then aloes and coriander seed. I remembered how the slave-girl had known this magic.

He burnt them; the blue smoke dazzled in the sun. The crushed and powdered seed crackled in its burning. With the black residue, moistened with spittle, he painted the palm of my left hand, and added a few drops of Indian ink. He had made a triangle, with letters and signs, and Arabic numerals, tracing them with a splinter of bone. The work was deftly done. Among the signs were an ass, a cow, a goat. . . .

“Look!” he muttered.

I gazed at my palm. For some minutes I saw nothing, and turned at last to speak.

“Look!” he said.

In the bright liquid black in the centre of the figure seemed at first a film, which, clearing, showed a vision of a street. A crowd passed through it. And in the crowd were men bearing crosses. This flashed out, and in its

place I saw a hill ; and on the hill, against black sky, white crosses. . . . The crowd thronged around them ; and one figure I knew by some strange insight was myself. One of the crosses crashed to the ground ; the multitude swayed, and seemed to move towards me. And they followed me. . . .

“ It is marvellous,” I gasped. “ But what meaneth this magic ? ”

“ Look again ! ” he said.

In a small attic a man counted money, and put it in a purse. A beautiful woman sat with him ; now and then he caressed her. . . . This picture also vanished ; in its place I saw the same man before a company of richly clad and bearded men. He had his purse in his hand, and opened it, and flung down the money on the pavement.

“ Had I that wealth,” I said, “ I would hold it more tightly than he ! ”

“ Look again ! ” he said.

I saw this time a glorious pageant, in bright colouring—such colours as one may see in pitch. A man whose face I could not see clearly sat enthroned, and multitudes bowed before him. There were trumpeters, there were guards in glittering armour, and beings that seemed like angels. The picture flashed out.

“ It is indeed marvellous magic ! ” I said, and still looked ; but now were only the smeared ashes, the ink, the figures, to be seen.

I went on wondering. What meant the crosses ? Who was the man with the purse ? Why did the crowd leave the fallen cross to seek me ; and who sat enthroned in that glorious company ?

I thought, “ Who else, surely, but I, if the vision came to me ? I was with the crowd around the cross, and they followed me. . . . I had the purse, and caressed the woman.” The next scene I could not understand. Why fling away good money ?

But it was surely I who sat enthroned. . . .

I went again to the palace ; the Sanhedrin, I heard, had gone over to the Hall Gazith to consult about the late business. I spoke to the captain of the guard of my errand. He placed me in charge of a quaternion, as we should have said in Pilate’s household ; and the soldiers, when word had been brought, took me through corridors and marble-pillared halls until we came to a great curtain of crimson and gold, which, drawn aside, revealed the Sanhedrin in session.

I looked round the many faces. In the semi-circle, several seats were vacant. Some present

were not members of the Sanhedrin, but were men of position in Jerusalem. I looked for Joseph of Arimathea, but saw him not ; Nicodemus ben Gorion was in his place. The Nasi, Hanan, was in the centre of the semicircle ; Caiaphas sat next him ; on either side were the heralds who recorded judgment. How much wealth, I thought, and how much power were there assembled ! And how varied the faces—craft and cruelty, fanaticism and sleek hypocrisy, avarice and liberality. . . .

“ Is this he ? ” asked Hanan, harshly.

The captain of the Temple guard had just entered. He bowed. “ It is the man, my lord.”

“ What is thy business with us, fellow ? Thou art a follower of the Nazarene, and wert but a few hours since in his train, shouting thy Hosannas.”

“ I played but a part, my lord. I am a Jew, and no Galilean, like the rest. I was in Pilate’s household ; they are but fisher-folk and peasants. Since he hath set himself against our own people, and hath proclaimed himself Christ of God, I have been no longer his disciple in my heart. But this he and the others know not.”

“ Thy conversion hath indeed been sudden,” said a rugged Sadducee on the left of the semi-

circle of seats. He bent forward to speak, hunching his shoulders, with the fish-like eyes hard upon me as if to read my inmost thoughts.

“ Why comest thou here ? ”

“ What givest thou ? ” I asked—and my heart beat fast, and my temples throbbed with the blood rushing swiftly through them, as I looked round the hard, shrewd faces—“ what payest thou, if I deliver him to thy officers ? ”

Hanan regarded me intently ; he had the crafty face of an old and savage fox. He turned to Caiaphas ; they whispered. Then, signing, they brought about them all those present in secret conclave. The muttering was like some twitter of birds about a roof.

Hanan turned to me.

“ The Sanhedrin approveth thy words. Jesus of Nazareth must die the death. For, as Moses saith, ‘ And that prophet, or dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken revolt against the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust you out of the way which the Lord your God commanded you to walk in. So shall you put away the evil from the midst of you.’ But this Nazarene hath followers in the city, who, if we took him openly, might raise a tumult. Bring

this fellow to us secretly, or watch until you can point him out in some private place to our officers. So shalt thou receive thy reward."

"What price pay ye?" I asked. I would not do this service for any trifle. If Jesus died, and I were known to have done this thing, to whom could I go for help? Peter—John—Andrew would seek to kill me. These men, having taken their prey, would not help me. . . . And Drusilla dwelt now by the Shushan Gate, in the narrow Street of Lanterns, and watched perhaps for my coming. "What payest thou?" I asked. "Throughout all Syria he hath many followers, and many believe he is indeed the Christ. He teacheth to break the Sabbath, and to consort with the evil and the unclean. I have heard him say he is to be king in Jewry. Rich and great folk are among his followers. He hath threatened also to destroy the Temple."

"And to rebuild it in three days," said one of the rulers, laughing contemptuously. "Carpentry is his trade; we shall have a fine new Temple on Moriah, my masters. In three days, mark you; and how long took our Temple in the building, and how many craftsmen? He is mad; we should have him thrust beyond the city gates, bound with chains. Let him dwell with his kin among the tombs."

"Thou hast been one of his company, and deservest death," said Hanan. "But we will give thee twenty shekels."

"Twenty shekels!" I screamed. "Twenty shekels! 'Tis not the blood-money of a slave."

"But a word, fellow, and the Temple captain beareth thee to prison."

"I will go then!" I said in fury. "Twenty shekels! I would not sell a dog for that. I sell him who calleth himself Messiah of God and King, and in whom half the countryside believes. Knowest thou what he calleth King Herod? 'That fox,' he calleth him. . . . Twenty shekels!"

The meanness of the offered bribe left me almost breathless. What use twenty shekels to Drusilla and to me? For the blood of one who might be very God, and, proving it, call down fire from heaven to punish me at his resurrection!

In impotent anger, seeing that even in betrayal I was foiled and robbed, I waited. Oh, had I been Jesus now, with my followers at my back! To shriek "Woe! Woe!" at these bearded elders, these "men of leisure," these Sadducees and lawyers! To grasp where they would not give; to have the Treasury coffers opened; their persons and houses

spoiled ! I looked at the semicircle of keen, cruel, avaricious faces ; at the rich robes ; at the hands covered with sparkling rings. Here alone was a king's ransom. Hanan—Caiaphas—this smug, greasy, black-bearded man, with gems such as would have built John his heaven ; this thin-faced, long-bearded rabbi whose eyes never left my face, though he spake not. " From him one thousand shekels of gold ; from him, two thousand." So should I give my order.

I waited, careless of my fate. " God, crush me if thou carest to crush me," I said. " I am indeed a broken man."

" We will give thee thirty shekels, and no whit more," said Caiaphas.

" So be it," I said, and went out into the night.

Shadow-forms, the babbling crowds thronged round me. A cohort of the Italian band passed ; a word of command rang in sonorous Latin ; for a moment the torches flamed ; they melted into darkness. I went to Drusilla's house.

XII

ON the morrow I went back to Jesus and the disciples. My heart was heavy within me ; I spurred myself to resentment of the familiar faces, the voices and gestures I knew so well. Not a trick of speech, of gesture, that I did not know from hearing and seeing a thousand times ; how Peter moved his shaggy brow in speaking, how John's fingers drummed impatiently on board or table, how Andrew cleared his throat before speech, how Lebbæus squeaked and made squirrel-like movements. How tired I had been of it all ! Yet now that all seemed over, how I longed for the old comradeship, and the innocent happiness of our communion ! I had taken the price, and, too late, a thousand memories came thronging through my mind. In peaceful days and storm, humble folk, low-born and poor and ignorant, they had yet been my friends. What we had, we had shared together.

How cold and hard those crafty, avaricious, callous faces of the men before whom I had stood so lately ! Christ's enemies—and once mine.

Peter clapped me roughly on the shoulder ; I started. " Man, thou art in the world of dream," he said. " Rouse thyself. We go to eat our passover in the city."

" Is the house chosen ? " I asked.

" John and I have found it. The Master sent us, telling us that if we saw a man with a pitcher of water in his hand, we should know that whither he went our passover should be eaten. And the good man of the house showed us a large upper room, to which we go."

For the last time, in the dusk, we went from Bethany by the familiar road over the Mount of Olives, where the sun of another day had seen his triumph. Sense of coming tragedy seemed upon several ; now and then one would speak of the old days of the ministry. Entering Jerusalem, we came to the appointed house, and climbed the stairs to the guest-room. It was a large room, as Peter had said ; the walls were coated with a white wash ; and on the floor lay the *trinaclia* or mats on which were pillow-couches for the guests. Low, gaily-painted tables were set for the meal.

Jesus reclined with John on the central *trinaclium*, and sometimes the beloved disciple rested his head on the Master's breast. It seemed to me one flaw in his character, and perhaps to have had its influence on his failure, that Jesus showed this favouritism for Peter and for John. Andrew, Lebbæus, and I were together. Now while we ate the unleavened bread of the feast, Jesus looked troubled in spirit, and said, "The hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto him by whom he is betrayed ; it were better for that man if he had never been born." I started ; then looked from one face to another, as if to detect—as each now tried to do—some sign of guilt. The disciples whispered together, "Is it I ? Is it I ? " But I myself was silent.

Jesus rose, and took off his upper garments, *simchah* and *cetoneth*, so that to the waist he was stripped ; and poured water from a ewer into a large basin of copper, and washed our feet. Round his waist he had girded a towel. But Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet—never." Jesus said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." He said, "Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and head." Jesus answered, "He that washeth his feet is clean

every whit ; and ye are clean, but not all." He sighed deeply. Again it seemed to me unreal, fantastic ; an act of the theatre, this supper, the prophecy of doom which he might avert, the foreknowledge of betrayal, the sigh. . . . " I know whom I have chosen, but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

I whispered to Christ, some unknown power compelling me, " Lord, is it I ? "

" Thou hast said," he answered, in a low voice, cold and stern.

Peter made a sign to John, who asked, " Lord, who is it ? "

" He to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." He dipped the sop ; I waited. And he gave it to me.

The room seemed to sway ; the feeble lamp-light blurred, flickered, cleared again. I stood erect. Something strange was happening ; something I could not understand. The starry Syrian night showed through the lattice ; a star fell, and I remembered how once he had said that he had seen Lucifer fall in his pride from heaven. My hand went fumbling at my lips. " It is not fair, it is not fair," I said to myself, choking, " he knew—and yet he let me. Knowing, he chose me. And why did they give the

bag to me, of all the disciples ? ” But in my heart something whispered, “ God is just. There is no appeal beyond justice. ” And then — What was it ? Oh, what was it ? Into the swine he had cast the unclean spirits ; into me entered something loathsome, foul, of nauseous and shuddering horror. I almost shrieked. God had left me ; the last spark, the last vestige of good crushed out by petty sinning and revolt ; I was man no longer, but beast, fit only to cry, “ *Tame ! Tame !* ” (“ Unclean ! Unclean ! ”) at the coming of men. God had left me, and Satan had entered in.

“ That thou doest, do quickly, ” said Jesus, in the low voice in which he had spoken before ; he spake no longer as friend to friend, or master to disciple. His voice was very hard and stern ; his eyes no more compassionate, but of an inscrutable coldness. *Yet he had known.*

It was on my tongue to call for pity ; to shriek that it was unjust ; that he had known even when he said that one of us was a devil, and might then have warned or stopped me ; that he could have prevented me, or could even now save himself ; that he was guilty in giving me the bag. Why give the bag to one so weak, so liable to fall, as I ?

I looked round the faces of my companions. They shunned my glance ; all save Lebbæus, who, thinking I was being sent to make purchases, called to me to do some business for him in the city.

I looked into the impassive face of him who had been my Master, and went down the stairs, groping, and out into the night. . . .

I stood for some minutes motionless at the end of the street in which the Last Supper had been eaten. The sound of a closing hymn came to me on the still air ; it was the concluding part of the *Hallel* ; “ O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good ; because His mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that His mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that His mercy endureth for ever.”

Oh, the bitter irony of the words to one who, of all men created, had found what none may find and live !—that His mercy, wide as it is, doth not always endure.

“ I called upon the Lord in distress ; the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.” . . . “ The Lord is on my side ; I will not fear : what can man do unto me ? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me.” . . . “ I shall not die, but live, and

declare the works of the Lord." "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death." . . . "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good ; for His mercy endureth for ever."

I clenched my fists. In that upper room they were secure ; set in a large place ; none to distress them, with God their friend. And He had been my Friend, and they my friends. Against the lattice I saw the profile of Jesus' face. I heard Peter's strong, gruff voice ; John's clear as a bell ; Lebbæus in his shrill falsetto. But a few minutes since, and I had been one of them, and the bitter herbs, the unleavened bread, the *charoseth* (a dish made of dates, raisins, and vinegar) and the Paschal lamb had been for me as well.

"It is unjust, unjust !" I almost shrieked. "Why should Peter be there in safety—John—Lebbæus—and I cast out ? Thy mercy endureth not for ever. Thou art not omnipotent, or Thou couldst save me still ! Jesus, save thyself now if thou canst, physician who healest others—Son of the Most High God ! Thy blood is on thine own head."

How cold, how pitiless, and yet, I thought, not without some sadness his glance !

The evening was still young. I went to-

wards Drusilla's house, but turned again, irresolute. Jesus and his disciples had left the supper, and had gone out towards the Mount of Olives. They crossed the brook Cedron, and entered a garden whither we had often gone together.

The name of the garden was Gethsemane.

I went softly away, and to the High Priest's house.

"I can lead you to him," I said. "But there are many with him, and some are armed!"

They gave me some of their own servants, men of the Temple watch, and a quaternion from the Roman garrison of the Antonia Tower. We passed between the gnarled trunks of the olives, lanterns and torches flinging red and yellow light upon the path.

I came to Jesus, and said, "Hail, Master!" and kissed him.

He said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

"He is the man!" cried one of the officers who was with us, and laid hands upon him.

But Peter drew a sword, and cut off the right ear of Malchus, one of the High Priest's servants. Jesus said, "Peter, put up thy sword"; and Peter sheathed it. Jesus said, "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Can I not ask my Father for twelve

legions of angels for my guarding? These come against me as a thief with swords and staves, yet daily was I in the Temple, and no hand was stretched forth against me. But the scriptures of the prophets must be revealed, and this is your hour and the power of darkness."

A young man with a linen cloth about him followed Jesus; but the crowd laying hold of him, he fled naked. . . . And the disciples forsook Jesus, and fled. The captain and officers took him and bound him, and led him away to Hanan, who sent him to Caiaphas the High Priest. . . .

I had still the purse, and in a napkin my thirty pieces. I bought wine, and went to Drusilla's house, not caring to be seen of Jesus or his disciples. But it was said that Peter had denied him with oaths in the palace; that Jesus had convicted himself of blasphemy; and that he was to be delivered over to Pontius Pilate. This my friend Abiathah told me, I meeting him in the morning near the Temple.

I spent that night, I say, with Drusilla, and for a few hours drowned thought. Towards morning sleep came; I dreamed a dream. In my dream I saw a great cloud of people, men and women and children, and with them cattle, and sheep, and goats, and asses. They moved

slowly over desert sand, but not only, it seemed, over desert sand ; but also over years and centuries. Sometimes a bright light shone above as if to guide them, and sometimes smoky cloud. And before them went men in white robes blowing rams' horns. As I looked, through what seemed almost illimitable space and time, the fire changed to a blazing star ; its rays formed a cross of light ; and when it shone in the violet sky, the slow procession halted. Watching them, I saw that all had taken palm-branches, and myrtles, and olives in their hands ; and they cried, " Hosanna ! Hosanna ! Hosanna to the Son of David ! " Then the men in white flung down the rams' horns, and One also in white took their place, but on his forehead was a cross branded in red. His eyes met mine ; they were stern and cold. . . . I looked forward ; time and space almost illimitable stretched ahead, and a narrow path across the desert sands, over which he was to lead them.

I woke with the ringing of the Temple bells in my ears. It was early in the third hour, when I saw the Sanhedrists and priests threading their way from the Hall of Meeting to the Pretorium. I watched them cross the bridge over the Tyropeon. Batmanin, Chazzanim, heralds, scribes, garish in their bright robes

under the morning sun, moved slowly like the procession of my dream, and at their head was Caiaphas ; and after Caiaphas, Jesus, led by a cord.

The Jews refusing to enter the Gentiles' Hall of Judgment, Pilate came into the square fronting the Pretorium, and took his seat among his guards and officers. In the burning sunshine I stood and watched. "What accusation bring ye against this man?" he asked haughtily.

A hundred voices rose in clamorous answer.

"Take him," said the Procurator, "and judge him according to your law."

"We have not the power of life and death," they answered.

Pilate went back into the Hall of Judgment. I pressed in after, with the throng. Up the great flight of stairs, over the floors of lazuli and agate, under the gilded and vermilion roofs, to me so familiar, we passed ; and Jesus stood erect and pale to hear the judgment. "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

"Sayest thou this of thyself," asked Jesus, "or did others tell it of me?" It seemed to me now in this supreme moment of his destiny that there was something almost of majesty in his mien.

“ Am I a Jew ? ” said Pilate, scornfully. “ Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me.”

“ My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus.

“ Art thou a king ? ”

“ Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.”

“ What is truth ? ” said Pilate. And, turning to his accusers, “ I find no fault in this man ! ” But hearing that he was a Galilean, he sent him to Herod Antipas. . . .

I saw Jesus no more until the morning of the 15th Nisan.

While they led him to the Asmonean palace, I wandered miserable in the lanes and byways of the city. Crowds jostled and pressed about me, laughing, bartering, talking of the accusations ; they were unreal to me ; I heeded them not. All I thought of, all I saw, was the face of the Master, and the sorrowful eyes which for a brief moment had met my own in the crowd. . . . And yet he knew ; he knew ; he meant me to betray him. . . . Well ; we had stood on the hill above Nazareth together, looking in the sunset towards Carmel, Hebron, the Damascus road, the sea. We had been in

Peter's house, in the ship, at Bethany, on many journeyings. We had supped together, and he had washed my feet. Strange that, while I hated him, I could still—had I been capable of any love—have loved him. "Love is everything in the world." Yes—and it was my tragedy that I had not found it.

Husk that had been man ; dead among the living ; unclean, yet with no shrouded lip or clappers ; I wandered hour after hour, now in the fierce sunshine of broad streets and open spaces, now in remote cool alleys ; sometimes answering the greeting of an acquaintance ; sometimes stopping for a moment before a booth, or to watch some craftsman at his trade. Here was one inlaying small boxes with ebony and gold ; here another, fashioning a gourd with his knife ; a third, fringing a mantle. But they belonged to a world in which I had no part. Ended for me this life of the brisk mart and street ; over, the dances, the lanthorns, the Levites' chanting ; never more was I to stamp my curse at Haman's name, to keep Tabernacles or Passover.

And the bright eyes of women sought mine in vain.

The world seemed to have ended ; the solid earth to have given way beneath my feet. Soul-

less, my spirit troubled and dark within me, I came to an open space of ground, bare and stony, on the confines of the city. Two men worked there in wood. I stood and watched, as I had stood once in Joseph's shop.

"What make ye?" I asked.

"Look, friend, here is that which will settle one life's riddle. We have three to make." He and his fellow raised the timber. It was a cross.

"Who are the criminals?" I asked, but my mouth was dry.

"One Jesus of Nazareth, who hath called himself Messiah. He is to die the death, and good riddance to him, say I, meddling with high matters not his trade. I am a carpenter; I want no finger in the pot of my betters. Let those called to it rule the city, and give us what our fathers thought good enough. . . . There are two thieves also.

"The Procurator wanted him free; I was there, and heard. 'Behold the man!' he cried, as if showing your Jews what a man might be, and said he was not worthy of death. But he could not move those people; they wanted death; blood they wanted. I am a Greek, my father born in Athens. Oh, but you are a bloody race, you Jews, Eli; I have often said so. He was a good man, that. Pilate's wife warned

him—Claudia Procula, that is—she warned him by a public message as he sat on the tribunal that she had had a dream about this Jesus. Oh, they treated him vilely. They scourged him with the *flagellum*; they put on him a crown of thorny leaves, and flung an old red *paludament* about his shoulders; they did mock homage, these scum of the provincial soldiery, spitting at him, striking with the reed sceptre which he could not hold. ‘Will you kill your king?’ asked Pilate. ‘I will chastise him, and let him go.’ But they cried, ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’ Pilate had to give freedom instead to one Jesus Bar Abbas a robber; for it is customary now to release a prisoner; and for Jesus they would have only death. Pilate had a bowl of water brought, and washed his hands before the people, and dried them with a towel. ‘*I, miles, expedi crucem,*’ he said to an officer, in a voice that seemed to say, ‘If you must have him, you must’; and then, ‘I wash my hands of the blood of this innocent man.’ ‘His blood be on us, and on our children,’ cried your Jews. . . . So to-morrow they slay him, and we make now his cross.”

“And good riddance to the fellow, say I,” said his companion. “Things moved smoothly enough without him. And of late there hath

been nothing but bickering and quarrel in the city and in the Temple. He hath made bad blood between everyone ; here are some believing on him, and some not ; even the Sanhedrin divided ; he hath offended the Pharisees and scribes by his maledictions, angered the money-changers and dove-sellers and herdsmen ; taught poorer folk that their fathers were fools to pay heed to what Moses taught." He let fall the cross which they had raised, and, as it fell, its shadow fell on me.

His cross ! Then it was real ; real and terrible ; and no dream, no illusion. Something seemed to snap in my brain. And picture after picture crossed it ; now of still evening on the lake, and the stars above, the rippled water and slow-bellying sail ; now of a bleak mountain summit and crowds bending at his word to pray. Christ or no, he had been my friend once, and a good friend.

My mind was made up. I took the thirty pieces of silver from the napkin ; on the coins were the censer and the olive branch of peace, with the words, " Jerusalem the Holy." The Sanhedrin were in session, and I came before them.

" I have sinned ! " I cried. " I have sinned ! I have betrayed innocent blood."

They sat at their ease, with their smug, oily faces, their keen, cruel faces, their rich robes, their sparkling rings and gold chains. And here was I desperate, undone, hopeless. . . .

“See thou to it,” they said with cold and scornful indifference. “What is it to us?”

I flung the silver upon the pavement, and went out. Even the price of the betrayal was gone; nothing was left me. At that moment, a hundred things Jesus had said during his ministry flashed suddenly into new and strange significance. Dazzling-clear as a dark wood standing out in lightning, I knew now the *Sod*—the mystery—hidden under so many of his sayings. “If a man lose his life, he shall save it.” . . . “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” “If a man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me.” “O man, blessed thou art if thou knowest what thou doest, and cursed if thou knowest not what thou doest.” And the parables; the fish thrown back from the draw-net as we threw back the sheat-fish into the sea; the man who had no wedding-garment; the barren tree; the foolish virgins who had no oil when the summons came.

AND TO ME HAD COME THE SUMMONS.

I paced the city streets, up and down, up and down, until the dawn came. Once more the Temple bells rang out ; once more the trumpets sounded ; once more word that Hebron stood revealed rang out. As for so many centuries past, the throngs filled the streets and alleys, clamouring and laughing, making love, bartering, quarrelling.

And the sorrowful procession wended its way towards Golgotha, the place of a skull. . . . A maniple of soldiers in full armour under their centurion were in charge of the three prisoners, who bore their own crosses to the execution place. My eyes and ears were open to every trivial sound and sight ; an ass eating withered palm leaves, which may have had their share in the fleeting triumph ; a woman weeping ; the herald proclaiming in a loud voice the crimes of the convicted.

Jesus seemed to stagger, and almost fell. The centurion looked round sharply. His eyes sought among the faces of the crowd. " That fellow was one of his disciples ; let him bear the cross," he said. They seized hold of the man, one Simon of Cyrene, an African Jew ; he took the cross from the shoulders of the Master.

The procession came to the summit of the hill. Jesus was stripped, stretched upon the

prostrate cross, nailed and bound to it. Some rich women of the city brought medicated wine ; the two thieves drank it gladly ; he refused. Jesus was lifted up.

“ I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”

“ I, if I be cast down ”—had I thought in my pride and madness—“ will draw all men unto ME.” In Him, the God-man triumphed over the Man-God, as in me the Man-God triumphed over the God-man that might have been.

No sound came at first from the face drawn in agony. But suddenly he cried, “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

On a white board smeared with gypsum above the cross was the inscription in black letters—in three languages—Latin, Greek, and Aramaic :

“ JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS.”

I heard some say that they would ask Pilate to remove this taunt. . . . King of the Jews ? Son of David ? Christ of God ? My head was racked with torture, each hammer-blow on the nails of the cross had pierced my tortured spirit. Oh, why did he not now declare himself ; come down, and let the people know that he was God indeed ?

“ He saved others ; himself he cannot save,” some cried.

It was true. What I had thought after the tempest, what I had thought often at Bethany and on our journeyings, was true. He saved others ; himself he could not save. Even the dying thieves blasphemed. . . . But one of them turned his head, when the taunts were unheeded, and cried, “ Jesus, Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom ! ”

Almost to the last, I hoped that all might yet be saved. If he were the Son of God—if he should come down from the cross, and save himself,—then should I go to the disciples, and say, “ All this time past you have questioned and wondered, asking whether he be indeed the Christ ; saying this now, and now that ; asking if there were this kingdom, and when it should come. But I have done for you what none of you—not even Peter—had the courage to do. I have made him declare himself, having faith that he should not really die. My betrayal forced this miracle from him, more wondrous than all. Now before the eyes of all men he hath revealed himself by saving himself. Lifted up, he hath come again among you—as your king ; having power not only over others, but over himself ; and the knowledge to use that power.”

And then he turned to the dying thief—a man in agony like his own : “ This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”

The skies darkened ; what sun there had been seemed to die in the heavens in a sea of blood. Lightning flashed against the black background to the cross ; forked, and like silver chains, and in sheets of blinding fire. There came the reverberation of thunder ; low and solemn at first, culminating in peal after peal that set the old world rocking in dismay and wonder. And after that—silence, profound, unbroken, save by the hushed voices of the awe-stricken on-lookers, and by feeble sounds contrasting in vivid strangeness with the thunder-claps.

As the central cross stood illumined by the lightning-flashes, three birds circled round the dying Master.

A robin plucked a thorn from his crown, and, piercing its own breast, became red with blood.

A swallow circling round and round, cried, “ SVALA, SVALA ! ” (“ Console, console ! ”).

A stork, with beat of heavy wings, uttered its dismal note, “ STYRKA, STYRKA ” (“ Strengthen, strengthen ! ”).

Jesus turned his head as if in almost intolerable anguish ; real this, I knew, and no acting before men or under high heaven.

"My God, my God!" he cried, "why hast Thou forsaken me?"

What was the meaning of that cry? Theatrical again—for how could God forsake God, the Son of God? . . . No; it was very real; he was not acting. . . .

And, in myself, I knew the meaning of his cry. I had crushed out the God within me; but in him, teaching him what to speak, giving him power to do his mighty works, upholding him to this moment, God had dwelt in all His fullness. But at the moment of the supreme agony, the Divine Spirit that had strengthened and inspired him ebbed away, leaving him weak, empty, defenceless; as I was myself. That he might plumb the depths of anguish, as feeble man—God no longer—God had left him. The overpowering, bewildering sense of isolation fell upon him; of isolation, helplessness, loss, defeat. He was face to face with agony too great for human strength to bear; with unspeakable loneliness. For the first time he knew what the limit of agony was; what utter solitude, in which no friend could help, was; what terror was. And he shrank back, shuddering. . . . He could not bear it. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Suddenly peace seemed to return to him. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!" he said, and then in a loud voice, "τετέλεσται" ("IT IS FINISHED").

"Truly," cried the centurion standing by the cross, "this man was the Son of God."

I had remained on the slope of Golgotha, near the back of the throng; in that awful darkness, when men whispered among themselves that graves had even opened and given up their dead, I had lain still while the crowd swayed and groped in terror at the darkness and the storm. When the end came I crept away. At one moment of his agony, my fists clenched; "Save thyself if thou canst!" I hissed between my clenched teeth; "what are thy sufferings to mine? A few short hours for thee—for me, this spirit tortured everlastingly. Curse thee for bringing me to thy side! Curse thee for the contempt, the reproach, the scorn, which goaded me to my fate, and drove me out into the darkness! Curse thee for this agony of mine, now and to be, which falls useless!" Because for him and for me, beyond the veil, how great a difference lay!

And for him and for me, in the yet unrecorded history of the world, shuddering now

under the thunder, incandescent under the lash of lightning, a remembrance how different !

But as that awful silence fell which meant that God had died—I knew it now—a cold silence, not peace, yet in a sense its counterfeit, fell upon my spirit. I went down the slope of the hill ; to a wretched attic in the lower quarter of the city. It was in a house of which Abiathah was good-man. And here I wrote this record of Jesus as I saw him.

Son of David, Christ of God, Son of Very God, the world's Redeemer ! I knew it now. And now I know the doom that lies before me.

Moonlight falls upon the emptying street ; there is a hill without the wall, where One lies dead for man. And the same moon shines also on a field of dwarfed and blasted trees, of parched grass, flowerless. . . .

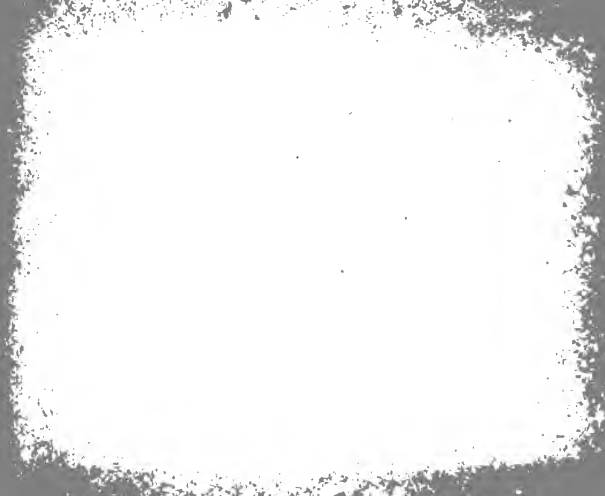
Jesus ! If I, like Dysmas, could turn my dying eyes, dazed and confounded by the loneliness, in terror at the coming agony, upon thee with a cry for aid ! But there is no help in earth, in heaven, in hell whither I go. . . . No help.

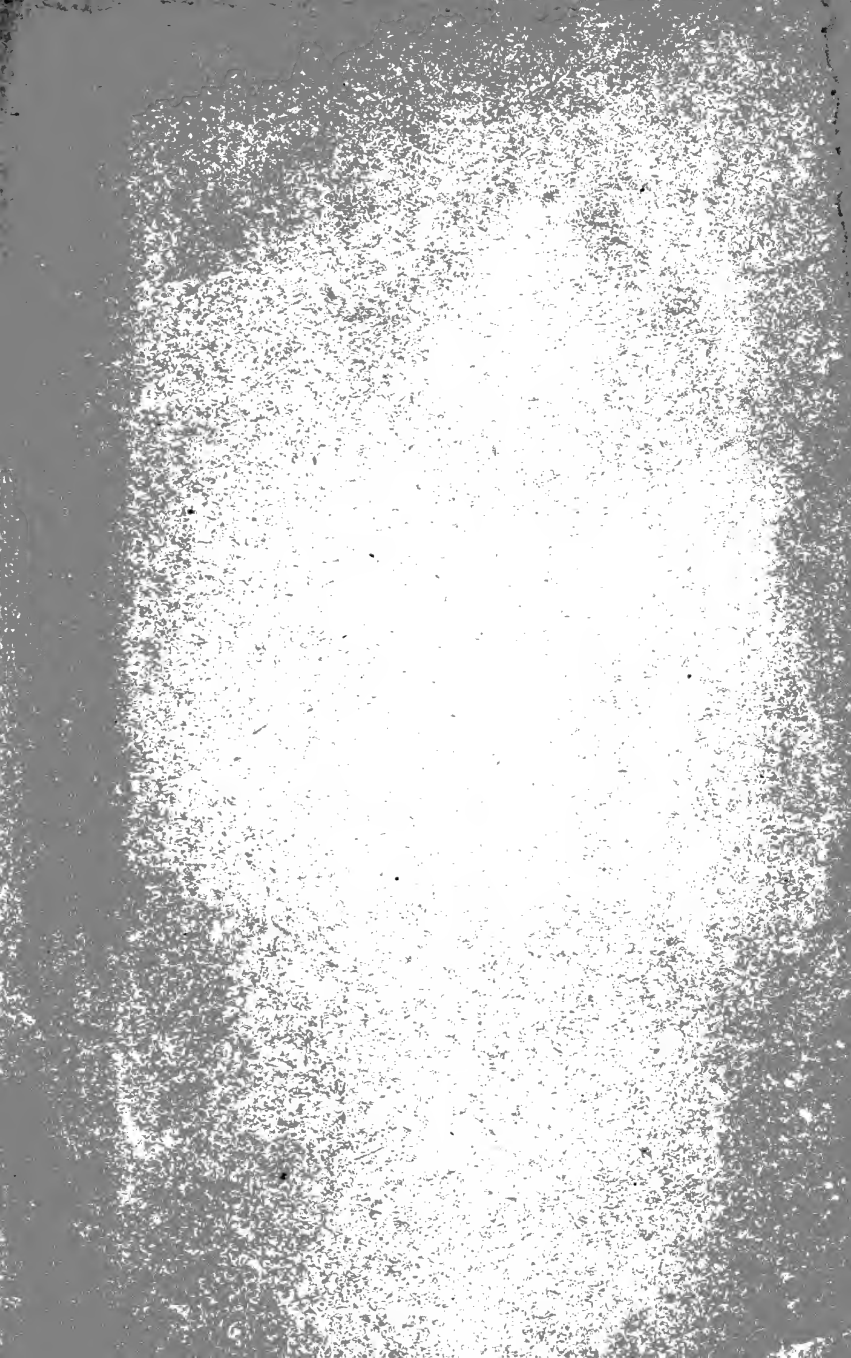
In the Wisdom of Solomon is it written :—
“ They shall see the end of the wise, and shall not understand what God in His counsel hath decreed of him, and to what end the Lord hath set him in safety.

“ They shall see him and despise him ; but God shall laugh them to scorn, and they shall hereafter be a vile carcase, and a reproach among the dead for evermore.

“ And when they cast up the account of their sins, they shall come with fear, and their own iniquities shall convince them to their face.”

At the end of my record of our friendship and the betrayal, at the end of this life so great once with hope and promise and intention, would that I could write, as he a few hours since, dying on his cross, cried in his shame and agony—and yet his triumph—“IT IS FINISHED” !





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